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THE

WORKS

OF THE

REV. P. DODDRIDGE, D. D.

VOLUME VII.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR,

CONTAINING THE LATTER PART OF

THE HISTORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,

AS RECORDED BY

THE FOUR EVANGELISTS,

DISPOSED IN THE

ORDER OF AN HARMONY.

AND ALSO

A PARAPHRASE ON THE FORMER PART

OF THE

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

Ει δε τις υπο τυπων μη ωασχοι των λογων, υπο μονων αν των εν αυτοις δικαζηριων υπευθυνοιτο.

SIMPLIC. in EPICTET. Proem.

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1804.

ПУБЛИЧНАЯ
БИБЛИОТЕКА
ИМЕНИ А.С.ПУШКИНА

THE PREFACE*,

THE publication of this *second volume* of the *FAMILY EXPOSITOR* hath been delayed so long, beyond my own expectation, and that of my friends, that it may perhaps seem necessary to introduce it with an apology for that delay. But it would be tedious to enumerate a variety of circumstances which have concurred to occasion it. It is generally known, that the unusual severity of the last winter laid a kind of *embargo* on the press; and they that are at all acquainted with the business of *printing*, will easily apprehend, that under the most faithful and careful direction, a work of considerable bulk is liable to many other interruptions, even where the *manuscript* is entirely finished before the impression is begun. But after all, the chief reason why *this* hath been published no sooner, is (what I hope my *subscribers* will easily excuse) the large *addition* I have made of more than *fifty sheets* to the *hundred* which I was by the *proposals* obliged to deliver.

On the mention of this, I think myself obliged to renew my thanks to those, who, by honouring me with their names and encouragement on this occasion, have put it into my power to publish the work with such improvements; and shall think myself happy, if those improvements, however laborious and expensive to the *author*, may render it more acceptable and useful to *them*.

The *tables* prefixed to the *first volume* are included in *this*, and represent the disposition of the *harmony* in so clear a view, that by comparing them together it would not be difficult to find any particular *text*. But a deference to the request of some of the *subscribers*, engaged me to add another *table* at the end of *this volume* (of the same kind with that in *Mr. Bonnel's Harmony)*, which will at once direct both to the *section* and *page* where *any verse* may presently be found.

I cannot pretend so much as to conjecture when the remainder of my undertaking will be completed. I shall however proceed in it as fast as my health and other affairs will permit. In the mean time, I think it necessary to observe, that I have, by the advice of some considerate and judicious friends, deferred the *index*, and some other things which I intended to have thrown into an *appendix* here, till I have finished what I am preparing on the *Acts*; that so they may stand, as they very properly will, at the end of the *historical books* of the *New Testament*.

* The Family Expositor being originally printed in *six* volumes, the *second* volume began with sect. xc. but, the present edition being comprised in *five* volumes, our second begins with sect. cxvi. and the tables of chapters and sections which were formerly divided between the two volumes, are now found at the beginning of the first. Such a change, though we notice it, is of no great importance, and is attended with no disadvantage to the reader. Probably most will consider it an alteration for the better.

How far the *subscribers* to these *two volumes* may think it proper to encourage the rest, must be referred to themselves. In the mean time, as that must be exceeding precarious which depends on the continuance of one man's life and health, I would desire permission here to take leave of my friends, at least for the present, with such a serious address as may be the most substantial expression of my sincere gratitude and respect.

I should have thought, my honoured friends, that I had made you a very unworthy return for this public token of your regard to me, if I had offered you merely an *amusement*, though ever so *critical* and *polite*. It had been much better, on both sides, that the work should never have been undertaken or perused, than that these *Divine authors* should be treated like a set of *profane classics;* or that the sacred and momentous transactions they relate should be handled and read like an invented tale, or a common history. I have often reminded *myself* of it, and permit me now, Sirs, solemnly to remind *you*, that these are the *memoirs* of the holy Jesus, the *Saviour* of sinful men, *whom to know is life eternal*, and whom to neglect is everlasting destruction. *We* have here the *authentic records* of that *gospel* which was intended as the great medicine for our souls; of that *character* which is our pattern; of that *death* which is our ransom; of *him*, in short, whose *name* we bear as we are professed *Christians*, and before whose *tribunal* we are all shortly to appear, that our eternal existence may be determined, blissful, or miserable, according to our regard to what he has taught, and done, and endured. Let not the *greatest* therefore think it beneath their notice; nor the *meanest* imagine, that, amidst all the most necessary cares and labours, they can find any excuse for neglecting, or even for postponing it.

Had I not been fully convinced of the *certainty* and *importance* of *Christianity*, I should not have determined to devote my whole life to its service (for on the principles of *natural religion*, I know the *soul* to be *immortal*, and should expect nothing but its ruin in the ways of the most sanctified fraud :) but as I am thus convinced, I must make it my humble request to every one that enters on the perusal of *these volumes*, that they may, for a little while at least, be the employment of his retired hours; and that as he proceeds from one *section* to another, he would pause and reflect, "Whose *words* do I hear? Whose *actions* do I survey? Whose *sufferings* do I contemplate?" And as all must know they are the *words*, the *actions*, and the *sufferings* of Jesus the Son of God, our supreme *Lord*, and our final *Judge*, let it be farther and very seriously inquired in what degree the obvious and confessed *design* of the glorious *gospel* has been practically regarded and complied with: "Can I, in my heart, think that I am a *disciple* whom such a *Master* will approve, and whom he will choose for his attendant in that world of glory to which he is now gone?" Let the plainness of this advice be forgiven; for such is the temper and conduct of most who call themselves *Christians*, that, if this religion be true, their cold and unaffecting knowledge of the *history of Christ*, and of the *purposes* of his *appearance*, will only serve to furnish out matter for eternal self-accusation and remorse: and he is, at best, but a *learned and polite infidel* who would not rather be the instrument of conducting the lowest creature, capable of reading or hearing these lines, to the saving knowledge of a *crucified Redeemer*, than fill the most refined nation with his own applause, while the *grace* of the *Saviour* is forgotten, or his *service* neglected.

I have yet one farther request to add to those of my readers who are *heads of families;* which is, that they would please to remember the *title of the work*, and consider it as chiefly intended in its most essential parts, for a *Family Expositor*. I heartily rejoice in the reason which I have to hope, that low as our religious character is fallen in these degenerate days, acts of *domestic worship* are

are yet performed by multitudes of *Christians* of various denominations: yet I cannot but fear, that the *scriptures* are not so constantly *read* at such seasons as they formerly were; an omission which must be to the great detriment both of *children* and *servants*. One would think, that those who believe the *Divine authority* of *scripture*, and its *infinite importance*, should be easily prevailed upon to restore this useful exercise, at least for one part of the day; and I would hope, that what I here offer them may render it more agreeable and useful. It would give me inexpressible delight to find that this is the case in *those families* with which I am most intimately acquainted; and would be an encouragement to hope this work may be proportionably useful in places and times to which neither my observation nor intelligence can extend.

I shall conclude this *preface*, with my hearty prayers, that, weak and imperfect as these labours are, the *Divine blessing* may *every where* and *always* attend them; and that it may rest on all who have patronized them, and on all who shall peruse them! May every prejudice against the *truth* of Christianity, *or against* its *power*, be vanquished? May the most insensible minds be awakened to attend to *religion*, and may the weak and languishing be animated to press on to greater attainments in it! May those that are preparing for the *service of the sanctuary* (as every part of this performance is their concern,) be by every part of it more abundantly furnished for the various duties of their important office! And may those who are as yet but *babes in knowledge*, through the Divine blessing *grow* by that *sincere milk of the word*, which is here presented, as I trust, in its genuine simplicity! In a word, may many *persons*, *families*, and larger *societies*, receive devout pleasure and solid lasting improvement from it; that the great God, *of whom and through whom are all things*, *may in all be glorified*, *through Jesus Christ our Lord*, who in all the sacred volumes, and especially here, is *the Alpha and the Omega*, *the Beginning and the End*, *the First and the Last*, to whom be everlasting honour, love, and obedience! *Amen.*

Northampton, August 9th, 1740.

THE

FAMILY EXPOSITOR.

THE LATTER PART OF THE HISTORY OF CHRIST AS RECORDED BY THE EVANGELISTS.

SECT. CXVI.

Christ, on the mention of some calamities which had befallen others, warns his hearers of the danger they were in, if they did not repent, and illustrates it by the parable of the barren fig-tree. Luke XIII. 1—9.

LUKE XIII. 1.

THERE were present at that season, some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

LUKE XIII. 1.

NOW, while our Lord was thus discoursing of the necessity of being at peace with God, *some who were present at that time, told him of those* unhappy *Galileans*, the followers of Judas Gaulonites[a], who had rendered themselves obnoxious to the Roman power by some acts or principles of resistance to it; and *whose blood Pilate* the governor *had* in effect *mingled with their sacrifices*, having circumvented and slain them when they were come to worship in the temple at a public feast.

SECT. CXVI.

Luke XIII. 1.

And

[a] *Told him of those Galileans*, the followers of Judas Gaulonites.] *Josephus* has given us the story of this Judas Gaulonites at large, *Antiq.* lib. xviii. cap. 1, § 1. (See also *Bell. Jud.* lib. ii. cap. 8 (al. 7), § 1; cap. 17. § 8; & lib. vii. cap. 8. (al. 28), *Havercamp.*) It appears he was at the head of *a sect* who asserted God to be their only Sovereign, and were so utterly averse to a submission to the Roman power, that they accounted it unlawful to pay tribute unto Cæsar, and rather would endure the greatest torments than give any man the title of *lord*. This Judas is probably the person whom Gamaliel refers to by the name of Judas of Galilee, Acts v. 37.—*Josephus* does not mention the slaughter of these Galileans (which, by the way, makes Zegerus's interpretation very improbable, that they were actually slain at the altar, in contempt of the temple); but he records an action of Pilate that much resembles it, of the manner of his treating *the Samaritans; Antiq.* lib. xviii. cap. 4 (al. 5), § 1.—Perhaps this story of the Galileans might now be mentioned to Christ with a design of leading him into a snare, whether he should justify or condemn the persons that were slain.

[b] *You*

SECT. CXVI.

Luke XIII. 2.

And Jesus, without making any remarks on the cause on which they were engaged, endeavoured, with his usual wisdom and piety, to lead the minds of his hearers into some profitable reflections upon the event; and, *in reply, said to them, Do you think that these Galileans were* notorious *sinners above all* the rest of *the Galileans, that they suffered such* sad *things* as these, and 3 were cut off in so miserable a manner? If you do, you are very unfit to judge of the conduct of Providence: for, howsoever you may censure them, as shewn hereby to be the most enormous sinners, *I tell you, No;* you are not to conclude from hence, this was the case; *but, except you repent, you shall all perish thus*[b]; vengeance will overtake you in your evil ways, and, in the desolating judgments, that will shortly come on your whole nation, the blood of many of you shall be mingled with your sacrifices.

4 *Or*, to instance in another unhappy case that has lately occurred, I mean that of *those eighteen men on whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them*[c], *do you think they were greater offenders than all the* other *inhabitants of Jerusalem*, that they were thus providentially singled 5 out for destruction? *I tell you, No;* you would judge very rashly if you were in general to draw such conclusions; for the best of men may be involved with others in temporal calamities: *but* remember what I told you before, that, *except*

2 And Jesus, answering, said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?

3 I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

4 Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

5 I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye

b *You shall all perish thus*, ωσαυτως απολεισθε.] Some content themselves with rendering it, *You shall all perish as well as they;* and possibly no more may be intended: yet the rendering I prefer appears to be more *literal;* and I the rather choose it, because (as Grotius, Tillotson, Whitby, and many others have observed) there was a remarkable *resemblance* between the fate of these Galileans and that of the whole Jewish nation; the flower of which was slain at Jerusalem by the Roman sword while they were assembled at one of their great *festivals* (see *Joseph. Bell. Jud.* lib. vi. cap. 9 (al. vii. 17), § 3, 4); and many thousands of them perished in *the temple* itself, and were (as their own *historian* represents it at large) literally *buried under its ruins. Joseph. Bell. Jud.* lib. vi. cap. 4 (al. vii. 10), § 6, & cap. 5 (al. vii. 11), § 1, 2.

c *On whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them.*] From the *fountain of Siloam*, which was without the walls of Jerusalem, a little stream flowed into the city (Isa. viii. 6), which was received in a kind of *bason*, which some have thought to be the same with the *pool of Bethesda* (see 2 Kings xx. 20. Neh. iii. 16. Isa. viii. 6. and John v. 2. ix. 7). Being near the temple, it is no wonder that many frequented it for purification; but the calamity occasioned by the *fall* of the neighbouring *tower* is not, that I can find, mentioned any where but here; probably it had happened at some late *feast;* and some of Christ's hearers might then have been at Jerusalem.—Erasmus indeed takes this Siloam to have been Shiloh, the place where the tabernacle was first settled (Josh. xviii. 1. Psal. xxviii. 60), but without sufficient reason; see *Drusius, in loc.*—This last instance might seem in some respects more to the purpose than the former, as there was *no human interposition* attending the death of these men; so that it seemed more immediately *providential*, than that of the Galileans whom Pilate had massacred.

d *These*

ye shall all likewise perish.

except you repent, you shall all perish thus; you shall be pressed under the insupportable load of the Divine vengeance, and be destroyed under the ruins of that holy city in which you trust. SECT. CXVI. Luke XIII. 5.

6 He spake also this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?

And, in order to awaken them more effectually to such deep and serious repentance, *he spake this parable* to them; There was *a certain man* who *had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came,* for several successive seasons, *searching for fruit upon it, but he found none. And* at length, despairing of any better success, *he said to the keeper of the vineyard, Behold, these three years* together[d] *I* have *come to look for fruit upon this fig-tree, and* still *I find none; cut it down* therefore immediately, as a barren tree: for *why does it* thus *cumber the ground,* filling up the place of more profitable plants with its useless bulk, and drawing away nourishment from those that grow round it? 6 7

8 And he, answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:

9 And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

But such was the concern of the vine-dresser for its preservation, that *he said to him in reply, Sir,* I desire thou wouldst *let it alone this year also, till I shall dig* up the ground *about it, and lay dung to* the root of *it:* And then *perhaps it may bear fruit*[e], and if so, it is well, and thou preservest thy tree; *but if not, after this thou shalt,* if thou pleasest, *cut it down,* and I will say nothing farther to prevent it. By which parable our Lord did plainly represent to the Jews the Divine displeasure against them for having neglected the many opportunities they had enjoyed as planted in the vineyard of God's church (compare Isa. v. 1, 2. xxvii. 2, 3.) and in an awful manner intimated, that though they had hitherto, at his intercession, been spared, yet, if they continued unfruitful under the additional cultivation they were shortly to receive, on the descent of the Spirit, and the 8 9

d *These three years.*] Many have supposed that these words allude to the time of Christ's personal ministry, which, as most have computed the *chronology* of the *New Testament,* had now lasted *three years:* but it is certain the patience of God bore with them much longer than *another year.* Grotius therefore thinks it more probable, it may refer to the nature of a *fig-tree,* which, if it bear at all, generally begins to do it within *three years* after it is planted; but might to be sure be looked upon as *barren,* if it had disappointed the expectation of the planter *three years* together after the time, in which it should have yielded fruit, which was yet worse.

e *Perhaps it may bear fruit:* κ'αν μεν ποιηση καρπον.] It is in the *original* something of an abrupt way of speaking, of which *Raphelius* has produced many examples, (*Annot. ex. Xen.* p. 102, 103); but I think, the way of rendering the *idiom* I have here used, would suit it in most of those instances.

f Under

SECT. CXVI.

Luke XIII. 9.

the proposal of the gospel in its full extent and evidence[f], they must expect nothing but speedy, irresistible and irrecoverable ruin.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 6 WHICH of us may not learn a lesson for himself from this instructive *parable* of the *fig-tree?* Have we not long been *planted in God's vineyard*, and favoured with the cultivation of his ordinances, yea, with the dews of his grace too; and yet how little 7 *fruit* have we borne in proportion to those advantages? How long has he *come seeking it* in vain, while we have frustrated the most reasonable expectations, perhaps not only for *three*, but several of us for more than *thirty years?* Wonderful is it, that the dreadful *sentence* has not long since gone forth against us, *Cut* 8 *them down, why cumber they the ground?* We owe it to the *intercession* of our blessed *Redeemer*, the Great *Keeper* of the *garden of God*, that this has not long since been our case. *Let us not be high minded, but fear!* (Rom. xi. 20.) Let *barren sinners* reflect, 9 that this may be *the last year*, perhaps indeed the *last month*, or *last day* of their trial; for even now also is *the ax laid to the root of the tree!* (Mat. iii. 10.) And let them remember, that though *there be hope of a tree, when it is cut down, that it may sprout again*, (Job xiv. 7), yet, when the doom is executed on them, *their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom will go up like dust* (Isa. v. 24); and *every tree which brings not forth good fruit*, will be *hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

2 Let such therefore meditate *terror*, when *the judgments of God are abroad in the earth;* and, when others are overwhelmed in ruin, let them not harshly censure the sufferers, as if they were 3, 5 *greater sinners than* any *others;* but let them apply that salutary, though awful *admonition* to their own souls, repeating it again and again, till they are *pricked to the heart* by it, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

1 Terrible indeed was the case of those, *whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices*, and of those who were dashed to pieces in a 4 moment by the *fall of Siloam's tower:* but infinitely more dreadful will be the condition of them, that *fall into the hands of the living God* (Heb. x. 31), especially of those deceivers, who, having surrounded his altars with the hypocritical forms of devotion, shall themselves be made the victims of his justice, and be crushed by the resistless weight of his almighty vengeance.

SECT.

[f] Under the additional cultivation, &c.] The extraordinary means used to bring them to repentance after the resurrection of Christ, by the effusion of his Spirit, and the preaching of the *apostles*, might, with great propriety, be expressed by *digging round* the barren tree, and applying warm *compost*, or *dung*, to its roots.

SECT. CXVII.

Christ cures a crooked woman in the synagogue, and vindicates his doing it on the sabbath-day; and afterwards repeats the parables of the grain of mustard-seed, and of the leaven. Luke XIII. 10—22.

LUKE XIII. 10.

AND he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up *herself*,

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called *her* to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13 And he laid *his* hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

LUKE XIII. 10.

THUS our Lord went on in his journey through Galilee for a considerable time; *and as he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath-day, Behold there was* present a poor disabled *woman, who* (as the Jews used commonly to express it, and was now actually the case) *had* been afflicted by *a spirit of weakness*[a] no less than *eighteen years, and was bowed together* in *so* sad a manner *that*, from the time it first seized her, *she was utterly unable to raise herself upright*[b], or to stand straight. SECT. CXVII. Luke XIII. 11.

And Jesus seeing her, and intimately knowing all the sad circumstances of her affliction, and the difficulty with which she was then come to attend the solemnities of Divine worship there, *called her to him, and said to her, Woman, thou art loosed from* that affliction, which thou hast long been under by reason of *thy weakness* and malady. *And*, as he was speaking these words, *he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was* strengthened, and *made straight*; so that she stood before them all in an erect posture, and moved with as much ease and freedom as if she had never been disabled: *and*, as was most reasonable, *she* in a very affectionate manner *glorified God* before the whole assembly; praising him for so signal and unexpected a favour, and 12 13

[a] *Had* been afflicted by *a spirit of weakness.*] It is very evident the Jews apprehended that all remarkable *disorders of body* proceeded from the operation of some malignant *demon*. Perhaps they might draw an argument from what is said of Satan's agency in the affliction of Job (chap. i. and ii.) and from Psal. xci. 6. (compare *Septuag.*) and 1 Sam. xvi. 14. They also considered Satan as having *the power of Death*. Heb. ii. 14.—And that, in some *maladies*, this was indeed the case, is intimated by *our Lord's* reply here, ver. 16. and by St. Paul's words, 1 Cor. v. 5. where he speaks of *delivering* an offender *to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.*—— The topic is very judiciously handled by that illustrious writer Mr. *Howe* (see his works, Vol. II. p. 360, 361); and there are some curious and entertaining remarks in Wolfius on this text.

[b] *Utterly unable to raise herself upright.*] This verson of μη δυναμενη ανακυψαι εις το παντελες seems preferable to that other which the words εις το παντελες might bear; "*She could not lift herself up, so as to stand perfectly straight.*" (Compare Heb. vii. 25. Gr.) For on the rendering I have given, which is equally *literal*, the *miracle* appears much more important than on the other.

SECT. CXVII. and declaring how long her illness had continued, and how desperate and incurable it was thought.

Luke XIII. 14. *But a ruler of the synagogue*[c], instead of joining in acknowledgments of the Divine power and goodness displayed in that gracious action of our Lord, was *moved with indignation*, which he endeavoured to disguise under the form of piety and zeal; and, as if he only had been angry *because Jesus had healed* her *on the sabbath-day*, he *answered and said unto the people, There are six days on which* the common *work* of human life *must be done, on* some of *these therefore* you may surely find time to *come and be healed, and* should *not* make these applications *on the sabbath day*, which you know is appropriated to the sacred purposes of religious rest and worship.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath-day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work; in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day.

15 *Then the Lord answered him* with a just severity, *and said, Thou hypocrite,* who thus makest thy pretended zeal for the honour of Divine institutions a specious cloak for thy malice against me, art thou not self-condemned? *Does not every one of you,* even the Pharisees and rulers of synagogues among the rest,[d] without any scruple or blame, *loose his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead him away to drink on the sabbath-day*, as well as on any other: though the work be more servile than what I have done, and the occasion far less important? *Now*, if you have such a regard to the thirst of one of your cattle, *was it not* much more apparently *fit, that this* good *woman, who is a* believing *daughter of Abraham, whom*

15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or *his* ass from the stall, and lead *him* away to watering?

16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound,

c *A ruler of the synagogue.*] It is plain that there were *several rulers* of the same synagogue. (Compare Mark v. 22, Acts xiii. 15. xviii 8 17.) And Dr. Lightfoot and *Vitringa* have observed that, in every town where there was a synagogue, there were at least *ten* men who were obliged constantly to attend on the public worship in it. Of these, *three* were called *rulers*, who presided in directing the worship, and judged of such little disputes and litigations as might be determined in the synagogue; but not without a reserve of appeal to the several superior courts. If of *these three* there was any *one* who had a distinguished authority, and might by way of eminence be called *the ruler of the synagogue*, it is strange the Jewish writers omit to mention it, which, so far as I can recollect, they never do, see *Wolfius* on this text, and *Vitringa, Synog. Vet.* p. 585.

d Even the Pharisees and rulers of synagogues among the rest.] Had not this been generally the case, the answer would not have been sufficient for conviction in the present circumstance. Perhaps *this ruler* might that very day have been performing such an office for one of his cattle with his own hands: I say, *with his own hands*; for it was by no means essential to his being *a ruler of the synagogue* that he should be a person of wealth or dignity in common life; though probably, in large and splendid cities (such, for instance, as Capernaum was,) such persons might generally be chosen.—*Critics* have collected passages from *rabbinical* writers, in which they allow it to be lawful to *feed* or *water* a beast *on the sabbath-day*. See *Lightfoot's Hor. Heb.* on this text; where he shews they were expressly allowed even to *draw water* for their beasts; a much more laborious work than *leading them to it*. See also *Wotton's Miscell.* Vol. II. p. 41—46.

bound, lo these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day?

whom Satan, by the Divine permission, *has bound* in this cruel manner, *lo*, for *these eighteen years* together, *should be loosed from this bond* even *on the sabbath-day*, especially when it might be effected without any labour, by no more than a word and a touch.

SECT. CXVII.

Luke XIII. 16

17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

And when he had said these things, all his opposers were ashamed, and perfectly confounded by the strength of such obvious and conclusive reasoning: *and all the multitude* who were present *rejoiced* in his triumph; *for* they were greatly delighted with *all the* wonderful and *glorious things that were done by him*, in which there was so amiable a display of his goodness as well as his power.

17

18 Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

Now on this occasion, for the farther encouragement of his friends, and confusion of his enemies, our Lord thought proper to intimate the great increase of his kingdom, notwithstanding the malignant opposition it should meet with, which he illustrated by two parables formerly delivered elsewhere: *and he said, To what is the kingdom of God like, and what shall I compare it to?* or how is it that I shall represent the propagation of the gospel in the world? *It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his garden: and* from so minute a seed *it grew* to a prodigious bulk, *and became such a great tree, that the birds of the air* came and *lodged in its branches.* So shall my kingdom, which in its first beginning seems to be contemptible, diffuse itself in time over the whole world, and the inhabitants of distant nations shall seek their shelter in it. (Compare Mat. xiii. 31, 32. and Mark iv. 30—32. Vol. VI. p. 353, 354.

18

19 It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden, and it grew, and waxed a great tree: and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

19

20 And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

And again he said, To what else *shall I liken the kingdom of God*, of which I have now been speaking? or how shall I describe the efficacy of its doctrine? *It is like* a little quantity of *leaven, which a woman took and covered up in* a mass of dough, consisting of no less than *three measures of meal*; and yet it insinuated and diffused itself thoughout *till the whole* lump *was leavened.* So shall the gospel make its way, and, by a secret influence, shall spread its efficacy through the hearts of men, till it has changed them into a likeness to itself. Compare Mat. xiii. 33. Vol. VI. p. 354.)

20

21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

21

22 And he went through the cities and villages,

And thus *he went through* all *the* principal *cities and villages* of Galilee, *teaching* them where-

SECT. CXVII. soever he came, *and travelling on toward Jerusalem;* to which he had now begun to steer his course, as he intended to be there at the approaching feast of the dedication, John x. 22. sect. cxxxiv.) and to spend the little remainder of his time during his continuance upon earth in that city, or the neighbouring parts; no more returning to these northern regions, till he appeared here after his resurrection.

villages, teaching and journeying towards Jerusalem.

Luke XIII. 22.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 12 AGAIN do we see, in a very instructive instance, the power and goodness of *Christ.* It wrought on a poor despised creature; 16 but *our Lord* considered her as *a daughter of Abraham*, and honoured, even in her, whatever traces of her father *Abraham's* faith and piety his penetrating eye might discern. Her zeal and willingness to attend on public worship brought her out, though 11 she *could not stand upright*, and had probably in that respect a much better excuse for staying at home than many could make, who now often absent themselves from the much nobler services of the *Christian* sanctuary.

10, 13 She met with *Christ* in the *synagogue*, and returned with a *cure.* And oh, how many, as the effect of such a pious zeal, though they have not been *loosed from their infirmities*, have at least been greatly strengthened to bear them.

16 *Our Lord* says that *Satan had bound her.* That malignant enemy to our bodies and souls rejoices in any opportunity of hurting either. But it is pleasing to think, that his power is always under the controul of *Christ;* and therefore shall never be exercised on his people any farther than their gracious *Redeemer* sees it consistent with their good, and will take care to render it subservient to it.

14 How gravely does this *ruler of the synagogue* instruct the people in a point of ceremony, while his heart was full of enmity to *Christ*, and hardened against every sentiment of human compas- 15 sion! Justly was his *hypocrisy* confounded and exposed.

We should with pleasure see this *Sun of Righteousness* thus victoriously breaking through those clouds, which envy and malice had raised to obscure him, and diffusing his sacred light from one 18, 21 end of the heavens to the other. With pleasure should we view the accomplishment of these *parables*, which represent the success of *his gospel* as so great; and we should daily pray, with increasing earnestness, that all the remaining nations and *kingdoms of this world* may at length *become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ:* and sincere converts flock to him from every side, even *as doves to their windows!* Rev. xi. 15. and Isa. lx. 8.)

SECT.

SECT. CXVIII.

Christ warns his hearers of the difficulty and importance of entering into the kingdom of heaven: and is not intimidated by the fear of Herod from pursuing his work. Luke XIII. 23, *to the end.*

Luke XIII. 23.

THEN said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

Luke XIII. 23.

sect. cxviii.

AND, as Jesus was proceeding in his journey towards Jerusalem, where he designed to be present at the feast of the dedication [a], being attended by several of his disciples, in a pretty large compass which he took by the way, *one* of them *said to him, Lord, are there [but] few that shall be saved?* Surely, if thy kingdom be so extensive as these parables intimate, see ver. 19, 21.) the number must be very considerable.

Luke XIII. 23.

But he said to them, Instead of amusing yourselves with such curious inquiries with relation to others, attend to what more nearly concerns you, and be solicitous to secure your own safety: And let me urge it upon you, that you *exert your utmost strength to enter in at the strait gate* [b], which I formerly mentioned as leading to eternal life, (Mat. vii. 14. Vol. VI. p. 235.) and strain, as it were, every nerve to break your way through those enemies, who are always ready to oppose your passage: *for I* seriously *tell you* the time is coming, when *many will* importunately *seek to enter in* [c], *and shall not be able* to do it.

24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

24

And, howsoever they may now despise and trifle with the means of grace, this will hereafter be the case, even with the most stupid and negligent

25 When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut

25

a Where he designed to be present at the feast of the dedication.] Mr. Whiston and some others place the following passages in a *different order*, and introduce them *after this feast*; but it does not appear that Christ was ever in Galilee before his resurrection, after this journey. He was indeed at Ephraim, or Ephrem. (John xi. 54. sect. cxli.) but, as that city lay on the confines of the tribe of Benjamin, at no great distance from Jerusalem (*Lightfoot's Disquisit. Chorogr. in Joan.* cap. vii. § 1.) the argument which Mr. *Whiston* draws from thence in favour of *his order* must be very inconclusive. See *Whiston's Harmony*, p. 385 and 403.

b *Exert your utmost strength to enter in at the strait gate.*] The original word αγωνιζεσθε fully expresses this. It imports the act of *contending* in the most ardent and resolute manner *with antagonists* in games or in war; and may well intimate that the *strait gate* is beset with a variety of *enemies*, through which, if we aspire to a crown of eternal glory, we must *break* and *force our way*: a representation equally just and awakening! Compare 1 Cor. ix. 25. Col. i. 29. 1 Tim. vi. 12. and 2 Tim. iv. 7.

c *Many will seek to enter in.*] The *Prussian version* renders it, *shall try*, or *attempt*: but I apprehend from the context, that it refers to importunate *entreaties* when they were actually excluded, rather than to feeble *attempts* now; though it is an awful truth that these likewise will be unsuccessful.

d *The*

SECT. CXVIII.

negligent of mankind, *as soon as ever the* great Lord and *Master of the family shall*, as it were, *have risen up* from his seat, *and* with his own authoritative hand *shall have shut* and barred *the door* [d], *and you* among the rest, *shall begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying*, with great earnestness, *Lord, Lord*, we beseech thee, *open to us;* but you will cry in vain, *and he* who now so graciously invites and waits upon you, *shall* then *reply to you, I know you not*, who you are, or from *whence you are* come; but determine to treat you as strangers, for whom I have no friendship or regard, and who have never been approved by me.

Luke XIII. 25.

shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are:

26 Some of you may perhaps *then* plead an intimate acquaintance and professed friendship, and urge the privileges that you once enjoyed, and the conspicuous figure you made in his church: but if any of you can carry it so far as that *you shall begin to say*, Lord, *we have eaten and drank in thy presence* in a familiar manner [e], *and thou hast* thyself lived among us, and often *taught in our streets* and houses, so that thou canst not sure

26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

27 have forgot us: *Nevertheless, he will* persist in disowning you, and *say, I tell you* again, *I know you not*, and, whatsoever you pretend to, I regard not *whence you are;* all the former relation to which you refer, is (as it were) blotted from my remembrance, since your hearts were still insincere, and your lives unsuitable to your fair professions; and therefore *depart from me, all ye that* habitually *practice iniquity;* for none of your character shall ever be admitted here. (Compare Mat. vii. 22, 23, Vol. VI. p. 238, 239.)

27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

28 This awful word, how little soever you may now regard it, shall wound you to the heart, and throw you into agonies of everlasting despair: and *there shall be* the bitterest *weeping and gnashing of* the *teeth* for madness and rage, *when you shall see* your holy ancestors, *Abraham, and*

28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all

[d] *The master of a family*, &c.] There is a majesty and pathos in this passage, as in many others, which no *paraphrase* can retain, in which the very words of *our Lord* do not make a part.

[e] *We have eaten and drank in thy presence.*] Perhaps some of the *nine thousand* whom he had *fed by miracle* may at last be in this miserable number. (Compare John vi. 26.)—Brennius refers it to their having *eaten the sacrifices* presented to God according to the *Mosaic* constitution.—But different persons may use this plea in different senses; and they who, while their hearts are hardened in impenitence and unbelief, have *profaned the Lord's-supper* by an unworthy participation of it, will find a sad sense peculiar to themselves, though it might not be chiefly intended.

[f] *Herod*

all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrust out.

and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets of the succeeding ages, *in* actual possession of *the kingdom of God; and* shall find *yourselves cast out* with contempt, and thrust back with just indignation. *Yea, they shall come* from the most distant heathen lands, even *from the east and the west, and from the north and the south, and shall sit down* in joyful multitudes, to partake of the heavenly banquet with your pious ancestors *in the kingdom of God*, while you are utterly excluded from it. (Compare Mat. viii. 11, 12, and note[f], Vol. VI. p. 295.)

SECT. CXVIII. Luke XIII. 28.

29 And they shall come from the east, and *from* the west, and from the north, and *from* the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

29

30 And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

And, behold, this shall be the case, not only of a few, but of great numbers; for *there are* many who are now *last* in point of religious advantages, *that shall* then *be first* in honour and happiness; *and there are* many who now appear *first, that shall* then *be* found *last;* and, on account of their abused privileges, shall appear as the most infamous and miserable of mankind. (Compare Mat. xix. 30, and Mark x. 31, sect. cxxxvii.)

30

31 The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.

These things our Lord said in his journey through Galilee towards Jerusalem; making many pauses in his way, that, in consequence of the shortness of his stages, he might have an opportunity of greater usefulness. And it came to pass *on that day*, when he uttered these discourses, *some* of the *Pharisees came, and* that they might, if possible, intimidate and drive him to a distance, they *said to him, Go forth, and depart from hence*, with all possible speed into the territories of some other prince; *for Herod* the tetrarch, in whose dominions thou art, *is* at this very time *determined to kill thee*[f], as he did John the Baptist, thy friend and associate, and seeks but an opportunity to effect it.

31

32 And he said unto them, Go ye and tell that fox, Behold I cast out

But Jesus was so far from being at all alarmed at this intimation, that *he said to them* with great steadiness, *Go, and tell that fox*, that crafty, wicked,

32

[f] *Herod is determined to kill thee: Θελει αυτον αποκτειναι.*] For the force of this *phrase* compare *note*[b] on John vii. 17, sect. xcix. and *note*[a], on John i. 43, Vol. VI. p. 126. It is very probable, considering both the wicked character and suspicious temper of Herod, that though he had a *curiosity to see Christ* (compare Luke ix. 9, xxiii. 8.) he was uneasy at his spending so much time in Galilee, lest he should occasion him some embarrassment either with regard to the Jews or the Romans; yet fearing, after all the anxiety which the murder of John the Baptist had given him, to make any attempt on his life, he might think fit thus to endeavour to *terrify him* with an empty threatening. In this view there would be a peculiar propriety in calling him *fox*, rather than *lion, wolf*, or *bear;* to which savage beasts the *prophets* had sometimes, with a plainness becoming their character, compared *wicked princes*. Compare Zephaniah iii. 3. Ezekiel xxii. 27. and Prov. xvii. 12.

SECT. CXVIII.

wicked, and voracious prince, *Behold, I cast out demons, and perform cures* in thy dominions *to-day and to-morrow*, and carry on my work a little while longer, *and the third day I shall be perfected*[g]; for the appointed time will quickly come when I shall finish my course, and have done all that I intend here. In the mean while he may well allow me a license to stay in his territories so long, at least on such kind and gracious designs: or howsoever he may be unwilling to allow it, yet, *nevertheless, I must go on* in this leisurely progress (as I just now said) *to-day, and to-morrow, and the third day*, till the determined season comes in which my ministry shall be fulfilled: nor do I fear the effects of Herod's malice; *for it cannot be supposed that a prophet should perish*, or be put to death, any where *out of Jerusalem*[h]; that unhappy city, the seat of the supreme court, challenging, as it were, to itself the sad prerogative of being the slaughter-house of the messengers of God.

Luke XIII. 32. out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

33 Nevertheless I must walk to-day and to-morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

And upon this, turning, in thought at least, towards Jerusalem, though it lay at the distance of so many miles, he took up a most affectionate lamentation over it, and said, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem*, thou guilty and miserable city! *who*, though thou hast been distinguished by Divine favours beyond any place on earth, yet with the utmost ingratitude and cruelty *slayest the prophets, and stonest*, as the vilest malefactors, *those who are sent unto thee* as the ambassadors of God! *How often would I have gathered thy children together* unto myself, with all the tenderness of parental love, and have sheltered, comforted, and cherished them, *even as a hen* [*gathers*] *her* little *brood* of chickens *under her wings? yet you* were still regardless of the offers of my grace, and *would not* be persuaded to hearken to my call,

34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen *doth gather* her brood under *her* wings, and ye would not!

[g] *And the third day I shall be perfected.*] Many suppose, and I think very reasonably, that *our Lord* is not to be understood as speaking exactly of *three days*, but of a *little period* of time: see Hos. vi. 2. and compare the *original* of Gen. xxxi. 2. Exod. iv. 10. Deut. xix. 4. Josh. iii. 4. 1 Sam. xix. 7. and 1 Chron. xi. 2. in all which places *yesterday and the third day* signifies *lately*, or *a little while ago*.—On this interpretation the word τελειωμαι, *I shall be perfected*, may refer to *Christ's finishing* the work of redemption, and being by death *consecrated* to his office as the great High-Priest and *Captain of our Salvation*; as the word is used Heb. ii. 10. v. 8, 9, 10. vii. 27, 28.

[h] *It cannot be supposed that a prophet*, &c.] John the Baptist had lately *perished in Galilee*; so that the expression εκ τυθεχιλαι can import no more than *this version* expresses, which *Elsner* has shewn to be its proper sense; (*Elsner Observ.* Vol. I. p. 242) —Drusius, Grotius, Knatchbull, and many other eminent *critics* refer this to the right which the *sanhedrim* alone had to punish a person as a *false prophet*.

35 Behold your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

call, and to accept my favour. And now, alas, *behold* with awful dread, and remark the prediction and event, *your house is left unto you desolate*; and the hour is just at hand, when your children, whom I would have gathered to myself, shall perish, and your temple shall be utterly destroyed: *and*, in the mean time, *I assuredly say unto you*, That I will quickly cease my labours among you, and retire in such righteous displeasure, *that you shall see me no more, till the time come when*, taught by your calamities, *you shall* be ready and disposed to *say, Blessed* [*be*] *he that cometh in the name of the Lord*[1], and shall in vain wish for the succour of him whom you now despise. (Compare Mat. xxiii. 37—39, sect. clviii.)

SECT. CXVIII. Luke XIII. 35

IMPROVEMENT.

AND who would not *welcome* such a *Saviour*, when he appears on so kind a design! who would not *bless him that cometh in the name of the Lord*, to *gather* our souls with the tenderest care and to shelter us from wrath and ruin! that *Saviour*, whose *bowels yearned over us*, and whose *heart* poured forth its *blood* for us! Too many *reject him*, and will not hearken to the kindest calls of his compassionate voice. Unhappy creatures! *the time will come*, when they too late will be convinced of their fatal error. Ver. 35 34

Let each of us be solicitous for himself. Away with those *vain curiosities*, which serve only to amuse and distract our thoughts. Let us call, and fix them down to the great concerns of our own salvation: and, if we would secure it, let us prepare to encounter difficulties, and *strive*, as for our lives, to break through all the opposition of our enemies, and resolutely *to enter in at the strait gate*. How many have *sought it*, when *the door* has been *barred?* and how soon may the great *Master of the house arise* and *shut it* for ever against those who are yet trifling! 23 24 25

Let

[1] *You shall see me no more, till—you shall say, Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*] Some supposing these words refer to the *congratulations* which Christ received on his *entrance into Jerusalem*, (Mat. xxi. 9. Mark xi. 10. Luke xix. 38. and John xii. 13. sect. cxlvi.) urge them as a reason for placing *this section* after the 9th and 10th chapters of John, or between *the feast of the dedication* and his *last passover*. But, as *our Lord* repeats these words again, after *his triumphant entry*, (Mat. xxiii. 39, sect. clviii.) they must be capable of another interpretation, and therefore can afford no such argument; nor is there any intimation of his return into Galilee between these *two feasts*.—It does not imply they should ever *see Jesus* at all; but only that they should earnestly *wish* for the Messiah, and, in the extremity of their distress, be ready to entertain any one who might offer himself under that character. Compare Luke xvii. 22, 23, sect. cxxviii.

SECT. CXVIII.

Let not *hypocrites* trust in vain words. *The workers of iniquity* shall be *disowned by Christ* at last, though they may have *eaten and drank in his presence.* But oh, who can express the disappointment, the rage, and despair, of those who fall from such towering *hopes*, and plunge, as from the very gates of heaven, into the lowest abyss of darkness and horror! Their hearts will endeavour to harden themselves in vain; their doleful cries shall be distinguished in that region of universal horror! but they shall not penetrate the regions of the blessed, nor interrupt the delight, with which even the dearest of their *pious relatives* shall *sit down in the kingdom of God;*

Ver. 26, 27, 28, 29

If we through grace have more substantial hopes, let us imitate the zeal and courage of our Divine Leader; and, whatever *threatenings* or *dangers* may oppose, let us go on *day after day*, till our work be done, and our souls at length *perfected in glory.* But let us carefully distinguish between those things, in which *our Lord* meant himself as our *Pattern*, and those which were peculiar to his office as *a Prophet sent from God.* That extraordinary office justified him in using that *severity of language*, when speaking of *wicked princes* and *corrupt teachers*, to which we have no call; and by which we should only bring scandal on religion, and ruin on ourselves, while we irritated, rather than convinced or reformed, those whom we undertook so indecently to rebuke.

Ver. 31, 33

SECT. CXIX.

Our Lord being invited to dine with a Pharisee, cures a man who had a dropsy, cautions them against an affectation of precedence, and urges them to works of charity. Luke XIV. 1—14.

LUKE XIV. 1.

SECT. CXIX.

AND it came to pass that, just *as* our Lord was finishing his journey through Herod's dominions, *he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees*[a], who was a magistrate of great distinction,

Luke XIV. 1.

LUKE XIV. 1.

AND it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat

a *As he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees.*] As all that follows from the *beginning* of this xivth chapter to chap. xvii. 10, is placed by Luke before the account of *his journey through Samaria to Jerusalem*; and, as I find no other event in any of the *evangelists* before the *feast of dedication* to which I conclude *that journey* refers, I am obliged (by the rule I lay down to myself of never *changing the order* without apparent reason) to take all these discourses and stories just as I find them; though I cannot pretend positively to say that Luke, who, no doubt, has sometimes *changed the order* in his narration, has exactly observed it here. It is however possible, that all recorded in these *chapters* might pass within the compass of a few days, and so would be consistent with interpreting chap. xiii. 32, 33, in a more *literal* manner than is absolutely necessary.

b A magistrate

SECT. CXIX.

Luke XIV. 1.

eat bread on the sabbath-day, that they watched him.

tinction [b], by whom he was invited *to eat bread*, that is, to dine with him *on the sabbath-day*; and many of the Pharisees were present there; and, as their usual custom was, *they were* narrowly *watching him*, to make the most invidious observations on his conduct.

2 And, behold, there was a certain man before him, which had the dropsy.

2 *And, behold, there was a certain man before him that had a dropsy*, who, having heard that Jesus was to dine there, had conveyed himself thither, in hope of cure [c].

3 And Jesus, answering, spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day?

3 *And Jesus, answering* to the secret reasonings which he discerned in their minds on this occasion, *said to the doctors of the law and* other *Pharisees* who were then present, What do you think now of this case? *Is it lawful to heal* a distempered person *on the sabbath-day?* or can there be any thing in so benevolent an action inconsistent with the sacred rest which is required on that day?

4 And they held their peace.—

4 *But they were silent*; as not being able, with any face, to deny the legality of the action, and yet unwilling to say any thing which might seem to authorize or countenance those cures which Christ performed on the sabbath-day as well as at other times; and which, in the general, they had been known to censure.

—And he took *him*, and healed him, and let him ago:

When Jesus therefore found that they would make him no reply, he extended his compassion to the poor man; *and, taking him* [*by the hand*][d], *he* miraculously *healed him* before them all, *and dismissed him* perfectly well, restored at once to his full strength, and reduced in a moment to his proper shape and bulk [e].

5 And answered them,

5 *And*, more fully to convince them how justifiable such an action was, even upon their own principles,

b A magistrate of great distinction.] If (as Dr. Whitby supposes) the person who gave the invitation was indeed one of the *grand sanhedrim*, he might nevertheless have a country seat in Galilee; as the higher courts never fail of allowing some recess to the members. So that Grotius's argument for transposing this story till Christ's arrival at Jerusalem seems inconclusive.

c Had conveyed himself thither, &c.] I cannot think (as some suppose) that he was one of the family: because it is said that *Christ dismissed, or let him go*, when he was cured; ver. 4.

d *Taking him by the hand.*] I know some have imagined that *Christ led him aside* to avoid ostentation: but the words do not express this; and, as our *Lord* speaks of *the cure* both immediately before and after it, there can be no room to imagine he intended to conceal it. Probably the circumstance of *taking him by the hand* is mentioned as an instance of his condescension; and shews that there was nothing in the manner of the cure which could be objected to as a servile work.

e Reduced to his proper shape and bulk.] If any ask how this could be, I answer, He that at once could *cure the dropsy* with a touch, could, if he please, annihilate the excess of water that caused it; and it is reasonable to believe *the cure* was wrought in such a manner as would make the reality and perfection of it immediately apparent.

SECT. CXIX.

Luke XIV.

principles, as he saw they were secretly cavilling at it, *he said in answer to them, Which of you if he have* but *an ass or an ox, that shall* happen 5. to *fall into a pit, will not immediately draw him out* without any scruple, even *on the sabbath-day* [f], though that is a much more laborious action, and the life of one of those animals is so much less important than the health of a man? And can you then, without the greatest injustice, condemn me for what I have now done?

them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath-day?

6 *And* they were all so confounded at the force and evidence of what he said, that *they were not able to answer him again to these things*, though they had not the candour to acknowledge themselves convinced by them.

6 And they could not answer him again to these things.

7 *And he spake* what may in one sense of the word be called *a parable*, that is, a grave, concise, and memorable sentence (see note [b], Vol. VI. p. 339), *to those who were invited* to dinner, *when he observed how they chose* and contended for *the chief seats* at the table; *and*, to reprove them for their pride, and recommend humility, 8 he *said unto them*, There is one thing I would on this occasion address to every one in the company, namely, *When thou art invited by any* friend *to a wedding-feast*, or any other great entertainment, remember the hint which Solomon has given (Prov. xxv. 6, 7), and *do not sit down in the uppermost place, lest another* of *more honourable* rank in life *than thee should* happen to 9 *be invited by him. And he that invited you both should come and say to thee*, Thou must *give place to this person; and thou shouldst then*, to avoid a second disgrace of this nature, *begin with shame to take the* very *lowest place*, as conscious how much thou hast exposed thyself by so haugh-10 ty and foolish a behaviour. *But* rather, on the contrary, *when thou art* thus *invited, go and sit down* at first *in the lowest place* thou canst find [g]. *that when he that invited thee comes* into the room, *he may say to thee*, My *friend go up higher:*

7 And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

8 When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;

9 And he that bad thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he

[f] *If he have* but *an ass or an ox*, &c.] *Our Lord* had used the same reason before, almost in the same words, when vindicating the cure of *the man whose hand was withered* (Mat. xii. 11, Vol. VI. p. 273); and at another time had urged an argument in effect the same with regard to the cure of *the crooked woman*: (Luke xiii. 15, sect. cxvii.) Which may serve, among a variety of other instances, to vindicate several *repetitions* which must be supposed, if we desire to assert the exact and circumstantial truth of the sacred historians.—See *Wotton's Miscell.* Vol. II. p. 27.

[g] *Sit down* at first *in the lowest place.*] It is most probable that Christ himself, as illustrious a person as he was, had accordingly done thus, and *sat down* among them *in the lowest place* at the table.

[h] *Invite*

SECT. CXIX.

Luke XIV. 10

be may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

er: then shall thy modesty be followed with a distinguished reward, and *thou shalt* thus *have honour in the sight* both of the master of the feast and *of* all *them that sit at table with thee*, as having assumed nothing to thyself, but rather been contented to stoop to thine inferiors.

11 For whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.

11 *For* this may be laid down as a certain maxim in life, and happy is the man that attends to it, *Every one who exalts himself* beyond his proper rank and circumstances, *shall be* proportionably *humbled* and mortified; *but he that* willingly *humbles himself shall be exalted* and honoured, as well as beloved, both by God and man. (Compare Mat. xxiii. 12, and Luke xviii. 14.)

12 Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor *thy* rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again and a recompence be made.

12 *Then said he also to him that invited him*, If you desire to improve what you have to the best advantage, spend it in charity, rather than in magnificence and luxury: and *when thou makest a dinner or a supper, invite not* so much *thy rich friends, or thy brethren, or thy kindred, or neighbours*[h]; *lest they* should *also invite thee again, and* thus *a recompence be made thee*, and all thou hast in return be to receive one banquet for another; which would introduce an habit of high living, at a great expence both of money and time, and would occasion the disorder of your respective families.

13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

13 *But* rather, *when thou wouldst make an entertainment* which should turn to the surest account, let it be plain and frugal, and *invite* to it *the poor, the disabled, the lame, [and] the blind*[i], who are incapable of providing for themselves: let these come frequently to thy house, to receive thine alms; or "send portions to them" when they cannot come. (Neh. viii. 10.)

14 And thou shalt be

14 *And* this will afford thee a much nobler satisfaction than banquets can give; and

h *Invite not* so much *thy rich friends,—or neighbours.*] Probably (as Mr. *Reading* well conjectures) he observed in the Pharisees a humour of making *magnificent feasts* (on the *sabbath-days* and on other occasions), and of treating *great persons*, chiefly out of pride, ambition, and ostentation; which might render this advice peculiarly proper, especially if he, who now gave this entertainment was, as many of his brethren certainly were, very deficient in works of *charity*. See *Reading's Life of Christ*, p 256.—It is plain the word *rich* (as Grotius well observes) refers not merely to *neighbours*, but to the *kindred* and the other persons that are mentioned with them: for if *these* were in low circumstances, their being *related* to them was an argument why they should be regarded rather than neglected.

i *The disabled*, &c.] We render αναπηρους *the maimed*; but the signication of the word is much more extensive, and indeed takes in both *the lame* and *the blind* afterwards mentioned; and may also include those whom the infirmities of age have rendered *helpless*.—Grotius thinks *this scripture* was the foundation of the αγαπαι, or *love-feasts*, among the primitive christians; but it is not evident. *Pliny* has a fine parallel passage. See *Plin. Epist.* lib. ix. epist. 30.

k *At*

SECT. CXIX.

Luke XIV. 14

and I may truly say, *thou shalt be happy in that they are not capable of making thee* such *a requital; for* their prayers shall descend in blessings on thy head; and, besides all the pleasure a generous heart will find in the very exercise of such bounties, *thou shalt be* abundantly *recompensed at the resurrection of the just* [k], if they proceed from a real principle of piety and faith. (Compare note [a], Vol. VI. p. 289.)

be blessed: for they cannot recompence thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

IMPROVEMENT.

How happy were they, who had frequent opportunities of conversing with *Christ*, whose discourses were always so wise and so useful; how well did he repay all the entertainments he received,

Ver. 1 in the advantages which he gave for religious improvement! In vain might his enemies *watch* for occasions against him. *In his tongue was the law of wisdom* as well as of *kindness*, (Prov. xxxi. 26. And surely *the lips* of his *ministers* and *disciples* would *feed many* to their everlasting benefit, were this blessed model to be more carefully traced! (Prov. x. 21.)

3—11 Let us particularly observe, what he here says concerning a *modest* and *humble deportment*, which is indeed the surest way to be *honoured* and respected. And let us take great heed, that *that good breeding*, which consists so much in the expressions of *humility* and a readiness to prefer others to ourselves, do not degenerate into a mere form, and prove, as it too often does, the cloak of *arrogance* and *pride*; but that it have its foundation in a lowly opinion of ourselves, and an habitual disposition to submit even to our inferiors, when we may do it without breaking in upon the duties and decencies of life, and injuring those to whom it may be exercised, by an *indulgence* which they know not how to understand or improve.

12, 13 Let us hearken to these exhortations to *charity* from the mouth of our charitable *Saviour*, who *gave himself for us*. And as *Christ pleased not himself* (Rom. xv. 3), let us not allow ourselves to squander away great quantities of money, in what may gratify our own senses, or make a gaudy shew in the eyes of the vainer part of mankind; but let us be willing to spare from the luxuries and superfluities of life, that we may bestow it on the *poor* and the *distressed*.

k *At the resurrection of the just.*] It is not so evident, as Dr. Clarke supposes, that δικαιων must here signify *charitable men*; it rather seems to me a strong and awakening intimation that none who neglect *works of charity* shall have their final lot among *the righteous*; which is evident from the many hundred *scriptures* which indispensably require *mercy* as well as *justice*. (Compare Mat. i. 19, *note* a, Vol. VI. p. 51.)

a *Shall*

distressed. And indeed, whatever our circumstances and possessions be, we must expect that the stream of our *bounty* will soon be dried up, if it be not supplied from the fountain of a prudent *frugality.* This *self-denial* may now in some instances be painful; but it will be amply *recompensed at the resurrection of the just.* 14 May we then meet with many, whom our liberality has fed and clothed, whom our knowledge and zeal have instructed, and whom our holy examples have edified and quickened! Here will be a foundation laid for the endearments of an *eternal friendship;* when that which has been formed upon a partnership in vice, or animal pleasure, shall be for ever forgotten, or be remembered with mutual horror.

SECT. CXIX. Luke

SECT. CXX.

Our Lord foretells, in the parable of the great supper, the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles. Luke XIV. 15—24.

LUKE XIV. 15.

LUKE XIV. 15. AND when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed *is* he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

AND while Jesus was thus discoursing, *one of the guests* at the Pharisee's table *hearing these* useful *things*, and willing to keep up so good a spirit of conversation, *said to him, Happy* indeed *is he who shall* be honoured so far as to *eat bread*[a] *in the kingdom of God:* blessed man, who shall live in the time of the Messiah, and share the entertainments he will prepare for his people, when these virtues of humility, condescension, and charity, shall flourish in all their glory!

SECT. CXX. Luke XIV. 15

16 Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many.

On this natural occasion, our Lord thought 16 it proper to remind him and the company, that many who, on mistaken notions of this kingdom, professed to desire it, were under the force of such carnal prejudices on this head, that they would in fact slight and reject it. *And* to this purpose *he* uttered the following parable, and *said to him* that had expressed so high a notion of the entertainments of his kingdom, *A certain man made a great supper, and invited many* guests. *And he sent* out *his servant at the* 17 *hour of supper to say to those that were invited,* as they

17 And sent his servant at supper-time to

[a] *Shall eat bread.*] It is well known that the phrase, *to eat bread*, signifies *making a meal;* and this not merely at a *common table*, but sometimes at a *feast*, where the provision is very sumptuous. So perhaps it might be at the *table* of this noble Pharisee, ver. 1. (See 2 Sam. ix. 7, 10; xii. 17, 20; and Prov. ix. 5.) Compare *note* [c], Vol. VI. p. 410.

[b] *With*

SECT. CXX.

Luke XIV.

they delayed their coming, My master desires you would *come* away as soon as possible: *for all things* prepared for the entertainment *are now* 18 *ready*. *And they all began with one* [*consent*] [b], as if by mutual agreement they had all contrived to put a slight on the entertainment, *to excuse themselves* on one pretence or another. *The first said to him* that was sent, *I have* just now *purchased a field, and I am under a necessity of going to see it, I entreat thee* therefore *to make my* 19 *excuse*. *And another said, I have* just *bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them*, that I may see how they will draw; *I beseech thee* therefore to *make my excuse*, and assure thy master that it is important business that prevents 20 me [c]. *And another said I have* very lately *married a wife*, and shall have company to entertain, *and therefore* you will easily perceive *I cannot come* to attend your master's feast and 21 neglect my own [d]. *And that servant returning told his lord* all *these things*. *Then the master of the house* who had made the entertainment *was* very *angry*, as he reasonably might be, to see such an affront put upon his splendid preparations, and such an ungrateful return made for the peculiar kindness and respect he had shewn in sending for these guests; *and* therefore he *said to his servant, Go out directly into the streets and lanes of the city* [e], *and bring in hither the poor, and the disabled, and the lame, and the blind*, that they may come and partake of the entertainment;

to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready.

18 And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused.

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

21 So that servant came and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed and the halt, and the blind.

b *With one* [*consent*]; *απο μιας*] Of all the various methods which learned men have taken to supply the *ellipsis* here (which may be seen at large in *Wolfius, Observ.* Vol. I. p. 682, 683), it seems to me most natural to *understand* the word *γνωμης*, that is, *with one consent*; which supposition is maintained by Beza. The variety of their excuses render *φωνης, with one voice*, less proper.

c *I beseech thee make my excuse*, &c.] It is a beautiful circumstance that *our Lord* here represents both these *bargains* as already made; so that *going to see the farm* and *to prove the oxen*, that evening rather than the next morning, was merely the effect of rudeness on the one hand, and of a foolish impatient humour on the other; and never could have been urged, had they esteemed the *inviter*, or his *entertainment*. Accordingly it is commonly found in fact, that men neglect the blessings and demands of the *gospel*, not for the most important affairs in life with which they seldom interfere, but to indulge the caprice and folly of their own tempers, and to gratify the impulse of present passions sometimes excited on very low occasions.

d *I cannot come*, &c.] As the process of the *parable* represents a wise and good man offended with *this excuse* among the rest, we must suppose something in the circumstance of his receiving the *message*, or of appointing the time for entertaining company on his own *marriage*, which implied a rude contempt of the *inviter*, and made the reply indecent. It was not necessary to descend to such particulars.

e *Into the streets and lanes of the city.*] This seems the true *distinction* between *πλατειας* and *ρυμας*; the former of which signifies *a broad*, and the latter *a narrow way*, in which last the *alleys* may be included.

f *Into*

ment; for I had rather see my house filled with such guests than empty as it now is. *And the servant* quickly came back, and *said*, *Sir*, *what thou didst* please to *command*, *is done*; these poor distressed people are come in, and sat down at the table; *and still there is room* for more guests, and entertainment enough provided to feast many others. *And the lord said to the servant*, *Go out* then *into the roads* without the city, and, rather than fail, look for the poorest and most helpless travellers, who are sheltering themselves under trees *and hedges*[†]; *and*, if importunity be necessary to such, *press them* that you find there by the most earnest invitation *to come in*[‡], *that my house may be* well *filled*. *For I say unto you*, *that none of those men who were invited*, if they should now be ever so desirous of it, *shall* be admitted so much as to *taste of my supper*; since they have so rudely and ungratefully slighted it.

SECT. CXX.

Luke xiv. 22

22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

23

23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

24

24 For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

And in like manner, such will the Divine conduct be with regard to the gospel. God sends his messengers in the most importunate manner to invite you Jews to come and partake of its rich entertainment; yet you neglect it on the meanest pretences, and one is too busy, and another too idle, to attend to it. But he will severely resent the affront, and (though it may seem to you as unaccountable a conduct as that which I have represented in this parable) will call in the poor, ignorant, and wretched Gentiles, who were wandering in the most helpless circumstances,

† *Into the roads and hedges.*] Any gross and abandoned sinners might be represented as in this wretched condition. (See Eph. ii. 12—17.) But it seems an excessive refinement of Brennius, to suppose the *hedges* here mentioned refer to the ceremonial law as *a partition*; as it likewise is to explain the *first clause* as relating to the *proselytes of the gate*, and the *second* to the *idolatrous Gentiles*. One might as well infer from ver. 24 that no Jews should be saved: and it argues a wrong taste in *criticism* to torture every circumstance into a fancied resemblance.

‡ *Press them* by the most earnest invitation *to come in.*] Nothing can be more apparently weak than to imagine, with St. Augustin and many others, that these words can justify the use of *compulsion* and force *in religious matters*; the *absurdity and iniquity* of which I have represented at large in my *sermon* on that subject. It is certain the word αναγκαζω is often used to express an *importunity* where there could be no *secular terrors*: Mat. xiv. 22. Mark vi. 45. Gal. ii. 3, 14. vi. 12. (as is likewise the word παραβιαζομαι, Luke xxiv. 29. and Acts xvi. 15.) and several instances are produced by *Elsner*, in which the word signifies *pressing persuasion*, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 244, 245.) And here, as it would be most indecent to imagine persons *forced* to an entertainment, so it would have been quite impracticable for a single servant to have *compelled* a multitude in this sense. There is an *ambiguity* in the English word [*press*], which much more exactly answers to that in the *original*, than the word our *translators* use: and it seems to me the part of a faithful *translator*, especially of the *sacred writings*, to preserve the *ambiguities* of the *original*; though a *paraphrase*, which speaks only a man's own sentiments, may sometimes venture to determine them.

SECT. CXX.

circumstances, in the ways of idolatry and wickedness; and his church shall be filled with them,
Luke XIV. 24 while you, who reject his gospel, shall in righteous judgment be yourselves rejected, and perish for want of those mercies which you now despise.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 24 MAY the infinite mercy of God forbid, that this should ever be our condition! The *gospel-feast*, like the sumptuous banquet of *Ahasuerus* (Esth. i. 3, 4), is of a very *long standing:* not only from week to week, but from age to age, God is sending to 21, 22 *invite new guests;* and, after all the millions that have been regaled by it, and nourished up to everlasting life, *there is yet room* for more. Still are *his servants* sent from one time to another, with 23 all the fervor of the most affectionate persuasion, to *urge sinners* to accept of these desirable blessings; (for such only is the *compulsion* that becomes a feast, and suits the nature of reasonable creatures.) May we not *receive the grace of God in vain!* May we not *perish*, as thousands before us have done, by *making light of the gospel!*

18, 20 It has often been observed from this *parable*, that they were *lawful occasions* which these unhappy people pleaded as their *excuse* for neglecting the invitation. And how many perish by what is indeed *lawful!* But the care of our *estates* or *cattle*, our *domestic affairs*, and our dearest *relatives*, will be destructive to us, if they be minded as our *main care*, and our hearts be so attentive to them as to forget the *one thing needful.*

21 Are we of the number of those who, though once blinded, impoverished and enfeebled by sin, are now brought as welcome guests to the *table*, which Divine love has spread? Let us adore the grace which *opened the door* to us, and *opened our hearts* to comply with the call; by its strong and powerful, though rational and gentle influence, *compelling us to come in.* Let the *servants* employed in the message *urge it* with a becoming earnestness; as well knowing, how much the heart of their *great master* is in it, and how much the happiness of *souls* depends on their accepting it. *Lord!* may we see thy *table furnished with guests*, and ourselves be so *happy* as finally to partake of those blessings, to which 15 we are now *commanded* to *invite others!* For *blessed* indeed *are they, who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!*

SECT.

SECT. CXXI.

Our Lord urges upon his disciples the necessity of considering the difficulties of religion before they take up a profession of it. Luke XIV. 25. *to the end.*

LUKE XIV. 25.

AND there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

LUKE XIV. 25.

AND as great multitudes attended Christ[a], and *went with him* in this his journey toward Jerusalem, *he turned* about *and said to them*, You now attend me from place to place with some tokens of regard; but seriously consider how much it will cost you to approve yourselves my faithful followers. SECT. CXXI. Luke XIV. 25.

26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

If any one comes to me to be instructed in my religion, and to obtain the blessings of my kingdom, *and does not* prepare himself, on a proper occasion, to act as if he did even *hate his father and mother, and* his very *wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life too*[b], that is, if he be not willing to abandon all these rather than to forsake me, *he cannot* really *be my disciple*, whatever he may pretend. 26

27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

And whosoever does not stedfastly resolve even to *bear his cross, and* to *come after me*, whenever he is called to tread the painful steps that I am taking in the way to crucifixion and death, *he cannot be my disciple:* and therefore, as I gave these things in charge to my apostles (Mat. x. 38. Vol. VI. p. 401), I repeat them to you as matters of universal concern, which require your most attentive consideration. 27

28 For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first,

And it is necessary to dwell on the thought; *for which of you, if he* be a person of common prudence, and *intend to build a tower*[c], or any other 28

[a] *Great multitudes* attended Christ.] Perhaps the *cure* of the man who had the *dropsy*, and some expectations as to the event of *Christ's visit* to this Pharisee, might cause *a crowd* near his house; and what follows might be spoken *the same sabbath*, on *our Lord's* coming out from thence: but as the *evangelist* does not so expressly connect the passages, I was not willing to assert it in the *paraphrase*.

[b] To act as if he even did *hate his father and mother*, &c.] Strictly speaking, *to hate* our nearest *relatives*, and our own *lives*, would be unnatural wickedness, and equally contrary to the dictates of humanity and the genius of the gospel. But it is well known that one thing is said to be *loved* and another *hated* in scripture, when the *former* is much *preferred;* and especially when, out of regard to it, the *latter* is *neglected* and forsaken. Compare Gen. xxix. 31. Deut. xxi. 15—17. Mal. i. 3. Rom. ix. 13 and Mat. vi. 24.

[c] *If he intend to build a tower.*] This phrase naturally suggests to *us* the idea of a more magnificent *edifice* than *our Lord's hearers* might probably think of on this occasion. It is plain that *towers* were frequently run up, probably of some slight materials, to lodge those who had the care

SECT. CXXI.

Luke XIV. 28. other edifice, *does not first* deliberately *sit down, and compute the expence* it will require, and compare it with his own circumstances, that he may judge *whether he has* a stock of wealth [*sufficient*] 29 *to finish it? Lest when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to complete* [*the work*] he had begun, for want of money to go through with it, *all who see it*, as they pass by, should 30 *begin to deride him, Saying*, in contempt, *This* must be surely a wise *man*, who thus *began to build, and was not able to finish* his plan; and here his imperfect work stands a lasting monument of his great discretion!

31 *Or what* wise *king*, if he was *marching out to encounter another king in war*[d], *does not first sit down and consider whether he* has any such advantage, as to arms, strength or situation, as may induce him to conclude that he *is able with* no greater force than *ten thousand men to meet* and oppose *him that cometh against him with* 32 *twenty thousand? And if* he find he has *not, while he* that comes with this superior force against him *is yet at a distance, he sends an embassy, and desires terms of peace*[e], acknowledging his readiness to submit to some things which may be disagreeable, for the preservation of his dominions, and perhaps of his life.

33 *So then* do you consider, whether you think it worth your while to adhere to me on these terms; for I assure you, I will admit you on no other; and *whosoever he be of you that does not* stedfastly

first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish *it?*

29 Lest haply after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him,

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

31 Or what king going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he

of *keeping vineyards* or *flocks;* and they were built pretty high in proportion to their *basis*, that they might command the larger prospect. Compare 2 Chron. xxvi. 10. Mic. iv. 8. Isa. v. 2. Mat. xxi. 33. and Mark xii. 1.

d *Or what king marching out to encounter another king*, &c.] According to Sir Isaac Newton's chronology, these words were spoken at *our Lord's last passover*, and might refer to Herod's leading his army through Judea against Aretas king of Arabia. But as Herod did not then appear to be *the weaker*, I cannot see that (even supposing the premises to be true) there would be any certainty of such an intended allusion.

e *Desires terms of peace: ερωτα τα προς ειρηνην.*] This represents the feebler person as *begging a peace:* a proper emblem of the humility and resignation with which *peace* is to be sought from an *offended God*, who is possessed of a *strength*, not (as in the case supposed here) merely *double*, but infinitely superior to ours.—The pious and amiable author of a late valuable piece called *Orthodoxy and Charity* (whoever he be) has given a quite different interpretation of this passage, which, so far as I can recollect, I have not yet seen, and which I am sure deserves consideration. He explains it (p. 43) as referring to those who have not courage to fight with their *spiritual enemies*, the world, the flesh, and the devil, and therefore make *the best terms they can* with them, and sit still neglecting Christ and religion. But if the passage be taken in this sense, *our Lord*, by declaring in the *next verse* that he will make *no abatement* in his own demands, plainly intimates how necessary it is to break through all opposition, and to determine to face all the difficulties in our way, which it will be our wisdom to view and consider, that we may be prepared with proportionable resolution.

he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

ly resolve to *give up all his possessions*, whenever he is called to it on my account, *he cannot be* owned by me as *my disciple* indeed.

SECT. CXXI.

Luke XIV. 34.

34 Salt *is* good: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

And if you are not my disciples indeed, your outward profession will be very insignificant; for though *salt* in general *is a* very *good thing*, and my servants, as I formerly intimated (Mat. v. 13. Vol. VI. p. 203), are the salt of the earth; *yet* I must again add, *if the salt be grown insipid, with what can it be seasoned?* or what can recover those whom my gospel will not influence and reclaim? And as insipid salt is such a vile and worthless thing, that *it is neither fit* to be used of itself as a manure *for the land*, *nor* even so much as fit *for* a place on *the dung-hill* to be there mixed with other dung; [*but*] *it is thrown out of doors*, and trampled under foot like mire in the streets: you also will be no less useless and contemptible, if, under the advantages and obligations of a Christian profession, you are destitute of a sincere principle of integrity and piety, and will be utterly abandoned and rejected as unprofitable servants. *He* therefore *that hath ears to hear, let him hear* it attentively; for it is a point in which not only the honour of my kingdom, but the salvation of your own souls is concerned.

35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dung-hill; *but* men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

35

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY our most serious *attention* be fixed on so important a truth; and may this plain and candid declaration of *our Lord* be duly regarded by us, as ever we desire to find the advantage of that relation to him in which we are so ready to glory! If we would not be *cast out* with disdain, and *trampled under foot* as worthless and vile, let us be solicitous that there may be *the salt* of Divine grace in our hearts; and let us undertake a religious profession with that deliberate *consideration*, which becomes a matter of such great importance. A hasty purpose will never bear us through the difficulties we must expect to encounter; and rash vows and thoughtless adventures, in this case, will only expose us to the *derision of others*, and the keener remorse of our own minds.

Ver. 35 / 34, 35 / 28, 32

Nor is the nature and evidence of *religion* such, as to have any reason to fear the severest examination. The demands of *Christ* are indeed high; that the nearest *relatives* should be abandoned, and even *life itself* sacrificed *for his sake*; that we be at least *mar-*

26

tyrs

SECT. CXXI. *tyrs* in resolution, and have so much of a reciprocal affection for him, as shall, like his *love* to us, be *stronger than death.* Yet how
33 reasonable is the demand! Did he leave *his Father's bosom* for us, and shall we scruple to abandon our *houses* and our *kindred* for
27 him? Did he expire on *the cross* for us, and shall not we be ready to *take up our crosses and follow him?* Shall it not be delightful to us to trace his most painful steps, and by the most costly sacrifices to approve our gratitude and our duty?

Blessed *Jesus, lead us!* and by thy grace *we will follow thee,* whatever be the path, whatever be the burden, whatever the terror of the way; knowing that if we partake with thee in *thy sufferings,* we shall at length share with thee in thy consolation and *thy glory!* (2 Tim. ii. 12.)

SECT. CXXII.

Publicans and sinners flock round our Lord, and he vindicates his readiness to receive them by the parables of the lost sheep and piece of money. Luke XV. 1—10.

LUKE XV. 1.

SECT. CXXII. THUS our Lord addressed himself to the multitude, and especially to his disciples, on the
Luke XV. 1. sabbath-day, as he came out from the house of the noble Pharisee with whom he had dined: now as it was *then* a season of leisure, and he appeared in public teaching the people, *all the publicans* in that place, *and* some other notorious *sinners,* who might not easily have been admitted into the Pharisee's house, *drew near to hear him* preach[a], being charmed with the condescension which allowed of their access.

2 *And* Jesus, moved with compassion for them uttered some remarkable discourses, admirably calculated for their encouragement, and that of others,

LUKE XV. 1.

THEN drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured,

[a] *All the publicans and sinners drew near to hear him.*] Some suppose they came by a particular appointment from all the neighbouring parts. But as Luke goes on in the story, without any intimation of a *change* either in the *time* or the *scene* of it, I am inclined to think these discourses might be delivered the same day that Christ dined with the Pharisee, (sect. cxix.) which being the *sabbath-day,* would give the *publicans,* who on other days were employed in their office, a more convenient opportunity of attending.—Some have concluded (I could never conjecture for what reason) that this happened in *Galilee of the Gentiles* beyond Jordan, from whence, they say, Christ went up to Jerusalem (Luke xvii. 11.) But that the chief part of this assembly were *Gentile idolators,* can never be proved; and if it could, it would be no sufficient proof of Christ's being now on the *other side of Jordan.* Yet I acknowledge it highly probable, that some *idolatrous Gentiles* might join with the *multitude,* who, if they understood *these parables,* might justly draw great encouragement from them.

mured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

others, who had lain under the most aggravated guilt. But *the* proud *Pharisees and scribes*, who, were present, *murmured* when they saw such a crowd around him, *and said, This man*, while he sets up for a religious Teacher, unaccountably *gives access to* the most profligate *sinners, and* sometimes *eats with them*, and makes no scruple to accept of invitations to their houses. (Compare Mark ii. 16. Vol. VI. p. 372.)

SECT. CXXII.

Luke XV. 2.

3 And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

4 What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

5 And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing:

6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together *his* friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.

7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.

But [*Jesus*] for the encouragement of these poor penitents, as well as to rebuke the censorious and uncharitable Pharisees, *spake to them this parable, and said, What man is* there *of you that has* a flock of *an hundred sheep*, who *will not, upon loosing one of them*, immediately *leave the ninety-nine* that were feeding together *in* the pastures of *the desert* [b], *and go* from place to place in search *after that which was lost, till he find it? And having* at length *found it, he lays it on his shoulders*, greatly *rejoicing*, as a man in such a circumstance naturally would: (compare Mat. xviii. 12, 13, sect. xciv. Vol VI. p. 494.) *And when he cometh home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, and says unto them* with the greatest pleasure, My friends, you may now *rejoice with me; for* my labour and search have not been in vain, but *I have found my sheep which was lost.* And as he thus is more delighted with the recovery of the sheep which he had lost, than with the safety of the rest, which had not wandered; *so, I say unto you, that greater* and more sensible *joy will be in heaven*, among the blessed and benevolent spirits that dwell there [c], *over one penitent sinner, than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need* such deep *repentance* [d], or such an universal change of mind and character.

3 4 5 6 7

Or,

[b] *In* the pastures of *the desert.*] Uncultivated ground, used merely as *common of pasture*, was called *wilderness*, or *desert*, by the Jews, in distinction from *arable*, or inclosed land. Compare Josh. xv. 61. 1 Kings ii. 34. 2 Kings ii. 8. Mat. iii. 1. and Mark vi. 31. (Compare also *note* c, on Mat. xviii. 12. sect. xciv.)

[c] *Greater joy will be in heaven*, &c.] Alluding, says Mons. L'Enfant (a little too coldly,) to the style of the Jews, with whom it was usual to represent the *angel's weeping*, for the corruption of men, and *rejoicing* at their conversion. But it seems very unwarrantable to suppose Christ thus asserting a thing merely because the Jews used thus to represent and conceive of it.—We may rather conclude from ver. 10, that, at least in some extraordinary cases, the *angels* are, either by immediate revelation, or otherwise, informed of the conversion of sinners, which must to those benevolent spirits be an occasion of *joy*; nor could any thing have been suggested more proper, to encourage the humble *penitent*, to expose the repining Pharisee, or to animate *all* to zeal in so good a work, as endeavouring to promote the *repentance* of others.

[d] *Than over ninety-nine righteous persons,*

SECT. CXXII.

Luke XV. 8.

Or, to illustrate the matter by another obvious similitude, that it may yet more powerfully strike your minds, *What* poor *woman having ten pieces of silver* money, though they were each of them but the value of a drachma, *if she lose one of them* out of her little stock, *will not* presently *light a lamp, and* take the pains to *sweep* out *the house, and search carefully* in all the corners *till she find it?* *And when she has found it, she* joyfully *calls her* female *friends and neighbours together*[c], to acquaint them with her good success; *and* concluding it will be agreeable news to them, she *says, Rejoice with me*, my friends *for I have found the piece* of money *which I had lost.* And, *so I say unto you*, that *there is* in like manner a peculiar *joy* in heaven, *among the angels of God over one repenting sinner.* Do not therefore wonder if I labour to promote their joy on this account, and condescend to familiar converse with those, whom you proudly despise as unworthy your regard.

8 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find *it?*

9 And when she hath found *it*, she calleth *her* friends, and *her* neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10 Likewise I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1. How graceful and lovely does *our Lord* appear, while thus opening his compassionate arms and heart, to these wretched *out-casts, for whose souls no man cared!* Who can choose but *rejoice* at this *jubilee*, which he proclaimed among them, and at the cheerful *attention* which they gave to these *glad tidings of great joy?* May we, who are his followers, never *despise* the meanest or the worst of men, when they seem disposed to receive religious instruction;

tions, &c.] It cannot be *our Lord's* meaning here, that God esteems *one penitent sinner* more than *ninety-nine* confirmed and established *saints* (who are, undoubtedly, the persons spoken of as *needing no repentance*, or no universal change of heart and life, in which sense the word μᾶλλον is commonly used;) for it would be inconsistent with the Divine wisdom, goodness, and holiness, to suppose this. But it is plainly as if he had said, "As *a father* peculiarly *rejoices* when an *extravagant child* is reduced to a sense of his duty, and one whom he had considered as utterly ruined by his follies, and perhaps as *dead*, returns with remorse and submission; or as *any other person* who has recovered what he had given up for gone, has *a more sensible satisfaction* in it than in several other things equally valuable, but not in such danger: so do the holy *inhabitants of heaven* rejoice in the conversion of the most abandoned sinners, and the great *Father of all* so readily forgives and receives them, that he may be represented as having part in the joy."—Though, by the way, when *human passions* are ascribed to God, it is certain they are to be taken in a *figurative sense*, entirely exclusive of those sensations which result from the commotions of animal nature in ourselves.

c *She calls her* female *friends* [τας φιλας] *and neighbours together.*] It might seem hardly worth while to ask the *congratulation* of *her friends* on so small an occasion as finding *a drachma*, (for that is the *piece of coin* here mentioned, in value not above *nine-pence*;) but is represented as the *tenth part* of her little stock, and the impressible and social temper of the *sex* may be perhaps thought of as adding some propriety to the representation.

instruction; but rather exert ourselves with a distinguished zeal, as knowing that *the joy* of the *heavenly* world in their recovery will be in some measure proportionable to the extremity of their former danger. SECT. CXXII. Ver. 10

Let us often recollect the charity and goodness of those *perfected spirits*, who look down from their own glory with compassion on mortals wandering in *the paths of the destroyer*, and who sing anthems of thankfulness and joy, when by Divine grace they are reclaimed from them. Let every sinner be touched with a generous desire, that he who has been in so many instances the offence and *burden of the earth*, may become the *joy of heaven* by his sincere conversion. And let the *solicitude* with which the little possessions of *this world* are sought, when they are *lost* by any accident, engage us more earnestly to seek what is infinitely more valuable, our own *salvation*, and that of the immortal souls of others. May we in our different stations labour successfully for their *recovery*; that we may another day share in that higher *joy*, which *angels* and glorified *saints* shall express, when they see them not only reduced to the paths of virtue and happiness, but fixed in abodes of eternal glory! 7 4, 6 8, 9

SECT. CXXIII.

Our Lord farther pursues the design of the preceding parables, by delivering that of the prodigal son. Luke XV. 11, *to the end.*

Luke XV. 11.

AND he said, A certain man had two sons:

Luke XV. 11.

WITH the same design of vindicating himself in conversing with publicans and sinners, of reproving the envy of the Pharisees, and of encouraging every sincere penitent by moving representations of the Divine mercy, our Lord went on to utter another most beautiful and affecting parable. *And he said*, while this various multitude was standing round him, There was *a certain man* in plentiful circumstances, and of a very condescending temper, who *had two sons* that were now grown up to manhood. *And the younger of them*, fondly conceited of his own capacity to manage his affairs, and weary of the restraints of his father's house, *said* one day *to his* indulgent *parent*, *Father*, as I am now come to years of discretion, I desire thou wouldst *give me* into mine own hands *that portion of goods, which*, according to an equitable distribution, *falls to my share*. *And he*, unwilling to make any individious distinction in distributing his effects, SECT. CXXIII. Luke XV. 11. 12

12 And the younger of them said to *his* father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth *to me*. And he divided unto them *his* living.

SECT. CXXIII.

divided his living between them both [a], and gave them his chief stock of money, reserving the house and estate in his own hands.

Luke XV. 13. *And not many days after* this division was made, *the younger son gathering all* his treasure *together*, and pretending a design of trafficing with it, *took a journey into a very distant country; and there* forgetting his relations at home, and *living* with a knot of companions like himself, *in a* very *riotous*, debauched, and extravagant *manner*, he quickly *squandered away* the whole of *his substance.*

13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 *And when he had consumed all* in this wretched course, it so happened, through the righteous judgment of God upon him, that *there was an extreme famine in that country* where he sojourned; *and he* soon *began to be in want* of the very necessaries of life. *And*, finding no shelter or relief among those who had been the companions of his luxury, and shared in the spoils of his substance, yet unable to brook the mortification of returning home in such circumstances, *he went and joined himself* as a servant *to a citizen of that place; who*, thinking such a worthless creature unfit for any better post, *sent him* away *into his grounds* [b] belonging to an estate in the country, where he employed him *to feed swine;* to which, however mean and disagreeable the employment was [c], this unhappy youth, who had once lived in so much plenty and splendor, was forced to submit: *And* even then, through the unkindness of his master, and the extremity of the season, *he* was kept so poorly that he had not bread; but *would gladly have filled his* hungry *belly with the* sorriest *husks* [d] *which the swine did eat:*

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

[a] *Divided his living between them* both.] It is plain, no significant sense can be put on *this circumstance* of the *parable*, as referring to the *dispensations* of God to his creatures. It is one of those many ornamental circumstances, which it would be weakness over-rigorously to accommodate to the general design.

[b] *Who—sent him into his grounds.*] That και, in such a *construction*, should be rendered in this manner, the accurate *Elsner* has shewn by a variety of convincing instances. (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 248.)

[c] However mean and disagreeable the employment was.] It is true, that among the ancient Greeks, the chief *swineherd* was looked upon as an officer of no inconsiderable rank; as evidently appears from the figure which *Eumæus* makes in the *Odyssey:* but this was an age of greater refinement; the unhappy youth was obliged to tend the *swine* himself; and if he be considered as a Jew, the aversion of that nation for this unclean animal must render the employment peculiarly odious to him; and probably this circumstance was chosen by *our Lord* to represent him as reduced to the most vile and servile state that could be imagined.

[d] *With the* sorriest *husks.*] A late *translation* (after Brown, Saubert, Grotius, and many others) renders κεραΐων *carraways*, or the fruit of the *carub-tree*, which bore a mean, though sweetish kind of fruit, in long crooked pods; which by some is called *St. John's bread;* but if the account which Saubert

eat: and yet there was *no man* that *would* take so much pity upon him as to *give unto him* one morsel of food; so sparing did the famine make them, and so much did every one despise this foolish and scandalous prodigal.

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

And now the infamy and distress of his present situation began to lead him into serious consideration; *and coming to himself*, he so far recovered his reason, which had before been dethroned and extinguished by the mad intoxication of sensual pleasure, that *he said* in his own mind, Alas, *how many hired servants* in the family *of my* good *father have bread enough and to spare, while I* his child, who have known so many better days, *am* even *perishing with famine*, and am not thought worth my food by this unkind master to whom I have hired myself! Whatever be the consequence of it, I am resolved that I will sit no longer in this miserable condition; but *I will* immediately *arise, and go to my father*, if all my little remaining strength can carry me such a journey; *and*, without vainly attempting an apology, I *will say to him*, O my dear injured *father*, I humbly confess that *I have sinned against* the great God of *heaven*[e] by a long course of vice and wickedness, *and* have been guilty also of the vilest behaviour *before thee*, in abusing thy goodness, and grieving thee by my unnatural rebellion; *And* in consequence of this I *am no more worthy to be called thy son*, nor can I expect the favour of being admitted into thy family on such terms again; nevertheless, do not suffer me to perish, but rather *make me as one of thine hired servants*[f], and I will be contented for the future to labour and to fare as they do, so I may but live in thy sight.

17

18 I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

18

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

19

20 And he arose, and came to his father.—

And accordingly *he arose* at that very instant, and set forward on his long journey, passing through all the stages of it with a firm resolution, Providence

20

Saubert himself gives of it be true, *swine* would hardly have been fed with any thing but the *husky* part of this, in a time of extreme famine. I therefore choose to retain *our version*; but take it, on the whole, to have been the *fruit of a tree* something of a *wild chesnut* kind. See *Drusius in loc.*

e *Sinned against* the great God of *heaven*] This was, as *Dr. Goodman* observes (*Parable of the Prodigal*, p. 207), an acknowledgment that *his father's yoke* had been so *easy*, that his throwing it off had been an act of rebellion *against God:* and it shewed also that his heart was touched with a sense, not only of the folly but the guilt of his conduct, and that the fear of God began to take hold of him.

f *Make me as one of thine hired servants.*] He mentions this, not because *such servants* fared worse than *slaves*; but because he was himself *an hired servant*, and therefore naturally compared his own condition with those of that rank in his father's family.

g *The*

SECT. CXXIII.

Luke XV. 20.

Providence taking care for his subsistence, though he was obliged to beg his way; *and* at length he *came to* the neighbourhood of the house in which *his father* dwelt.

But while he was yet at a considerable distance, his father, who happened to be then looking that way, *saw him*, and presently knew him, disguised as he was; *and his bowels yearned over him*, to see him in so wretched a condition: *and* immediately, as if he had forgot the dignity of his own character, and all the injuries he had received, *he ran* to his child, *and fell on his neck* with an eager embrace, *and* tenderly *kissed him* with tears of joy. *And the son* began to make his humble acknowledgments, as he before had purposed, and *said unto him*, O my abused and injured *father*, I am ashamed to appear in thy presence; for such has been my vileness, that *I have sinned against* the God of *heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called* and owned as *thy son*, or to receive any token of thy favourable regards. *But*, before he could make an end of the speech he intended, *the* compassionate *father* turned, and *said to his servants*, who were now gathered round them, Go immediately into the house, and *bring out the best robe* that is there [g], *and clothe him with it, and put a ring on his hand, and sandals on his feet*, that my dear child may appear like himself: *And* let others of you run to the stall, and *bring hither the fatted calf* that is there, *and kill it* [h] for a festival entertainment; *and let us eat and be cheerful: For* I esteem this as one of the happiest days of my life, and more joyful than the birth-day of one of my children; since *this my son, that was* so long considered by me as *dead, is restored to life* [i]; *and he who was* concluded

—But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son,

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on *his* feet.

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it*; and let us eat and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and

[g] *The best robe.*] It is observed by *Ferrarius (de Re Vestiar.* lib. iii. cap. 24.) that the στολη, or *long robe*, was a garment which *servants* never wore; so that his father's ordering any such garment, and especially *the best*, to be brought, was declaring, in the most moving manner that can be imagined, how far he was from intending to treat him like *a servant*.—His mentioning *the ring* and *shoes* spake the same language; as many learned writers have observed. See *Wolfius in loc.*

[h] *The fatted calf, and kill it.*] *Elsner* would render the word θυσατε, *sacrifice it*; truly urging that it was customary to *offer a sacrifice* at the *birth*, and sometimes at the unexpected *recovery*, of a child. (See *Elsner. Observ.* p. 249, 250.) But no such *sacrifice* was appointed *among the Jews*, nor could any have been lawfully offered but at *Jerusalem*, which does not appear to have been the scene of this *parable*: so that I can see no just reason for such a rendering.

[i] *That was dead, is restored to life.*] It is by a very common and beautiful *emblem* that vicious persons are represented as *dead*, both by *sacred* and *profane* authors (compare 1 Tim. v. 6. Eph. ii, 1. v. 14. and *Wolfius in loc.*); and the *natural death* of

and is found. And they began to be merry.

concluded to be irrecoverably *lost, is found*, so that I have renewed hope of comfort in him. *And* the whole house was filled with joy, and, having made the entertainment ready *they began to be cheerful.*

SECT. CXXIII.

Luke XV. 24.

25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

But while the younger son was thus received into his father's house, *his elder son was* abroad *in the field; and as on his return he approached the house, he heard* the sound of *music and dancing*, and was surprised at the discovery of such unusual joy.

25

26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant?

And calling one of the servants to come to him, *he inquired* of him *what was the meaning of these things*, and what could have occasioned this extraordinary rejoicing?

26

27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

And he said to him, It is, because *thy* younger *brother is come* home; *and thy father* is so transported with joy at his unexpected return, that he *has killed the fatted calf*, and made a very splendid entertainment, *because he has received him in good health* again, and found him happily recovered to a sense of his duty.

27

28 And he was angry, and would not go in:—

And he was very *angry* at the kind reception of his brother, *and* resolved that he *would not go in.*

28

— Therefore came his father out, and entreated him.

His father therefore hearing he was there, and being told he had discovered some uneasiness, *came out* with great condescension, *and* calmly *entreated him* to be pacified, and to join with them in the festivities of the day.

29 And he answering, said to *his* father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

But, instead of rejoicing on so happy an occasion, and running to embrace his penitent brother, *he* was still full of envy and resentment, and *replied to his father, Behold, I have served thee these many years*, and even to this day am as careful of thy affairs as if thou wast my master, rather than my father; *nor* canst thou say I *have at any time* departed from my duty, or *transgressed thy command; and yet thou hast never given me* so much as *a kid, that I might make an entertainment with* a few of *my* select *friends: But as soon as* ever *this thy* favourite *son was come, who has*, as much as in him lay, *devoured thy substance with harlots* abroad, in a long course of scandalous debaucheries, to his own ruin, and the infamy of thy family, *thou hast*

29

30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

30

of their children would be less grievous to pious parents, than to see them abandoned to such a course as this young sinner took.—But to suppose an *allusion* here to that *statute*, (Deut. xxi. 18—21.) which condemned a disobedient and *rebellious son to death* on the prosecution of *his parents*, would in this case be most unnatural, and utterly spoil the tenderness and grace of this speech.

SECT. CXXIII.

hast killed for him the fatted calf, and made him as welcome as if he had been the most dutiful child upon earth.

Luke XV. 31. *And*, though his father justly might have taken offence at his unbecoming reply, yet, with great gentleness, *he said to him, Son, thou art always with me, and* art every day receiving some token of my kindness; yea, *all that I have is* in a manner *thine*, as thou art heir to the bulk of

32 my estate[k]: *But* surely, on farther consideration, thou must acknowledge that *it was fit we should feast and rejoice* to-day; *for this thy* poor *brother*[l], *who was* but lately looked upon as *dead, is*, as it were, miraculously made *alive again: and he who was lost* to us all, *is* now happily *found;* and it will much better become thee to join with us in joy for his return, than thus peevishly to quarrel with my indulgence to him.

31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again, and was lost, and is found.

Now you, who have heard this parable, will easily see how indecent this conduct was, and how ungracious a figure this elder brother makes in my story. And I will assure you, that when you Pharisees murmur at the kindness shewn to the publicans, or even the Gentiles themselves[m], on their sincere repentance, you act with as ill a grace, and are the objects of still greater blame, in proportion to the degree in which men's eternal interests are more important than those that relate merely to the present state.

IMPROVE-

[k] *All that I have is thine.*] This is a material intimation, and suggests a strong reason against *murmuring* at the indulgence shewn to *great sinners;* for as the joyful welcome that the *father* gave this *younger son* did not incline him to disinherit the *elder brother*, so neither will God, out of a partial fondness for remarkable *penitents*, raise them to a state of glory superior to that of those who have on the whole made a greater progress in holiness, and done him more constant and faithful services.

[l] *This thy brother.*] There is a lovely opposition between *this* and the 30th *verse:* the *elder son* had there indecently said, *This thy son*; the *father* in his reply tenderly says, *This thy brother.* And it is a moving intimation that the best of men ought to look upon the most abandoned sinners as in some respect *their brethren* still; and should especially remember the *relation*, when there appears any inclination to return.

[m] To the publicans, or even the Gentiles themselves.] Many *commentators* have considered *this parable* in a view of peculiar *application* to the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and have observed that the *murmurs* of the *Jews* against the *apostles* for preaching the gospel to the *Gentiles* (see Acts xiii. 42—50; xxii. 21, 22; and 1 Thes. ii. 16) are represented by the conduct of the *elder brother.*—This was certainly a case comprehended in *our Lord's* design; but he undoubtedly had something more in his intention. He meant to shew, that had the Pharisees been as eminently good as they themselves pretended to be, yet it had been very unworthy their character to *take offence* at the kind treatment which any sincere *penitent* might receive. Thus does he here, and in many parallel texts, condemn their conduct on their own principles; though elsewhere, on proper occasions, he shews the falsehood of those principles, and plainly exposes their hypocrisy and guilt.—Thus the judicious Calvin states the matter; and it is strange so many learned writers should have puzzled themselves and their readers in so clear a case.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. CXXIII.

LET us here behold, with all due attention, the moving representation which our gracious *Redeemer* makes of the *folly of sinners*, and the *compassions of God;* compassions, which he describes, as one who himself felt them, and who in this respect, as well as others, was *the express image of his Father.*

We have before us in this *parable* a lively emblem of the character and condition of *sinners* in their fallen state. They are thus impatient of the most necessary *restraints*, thus fondly conceited of their *own wisdom;* and thus, when enriched by the bounties of the great common *Father*, do they ungratefully run from him, and say unto God, *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways;* (Job xxi. 14.) Sensual *pleasures* are eagerly sought; and perhaps all their earthly possessions and hopes are quickly paid as the price of them. While the means of obtaining these pleasures continue, not *a serious thought* of God can find a place in their minds: and then, perhaps, *afflictions*, heavy and complicated afflictions, come upon them; yet even under that pressure they will often make very *hard shifts* before they will be persuaded to think of a return; till at length Divine grace, working in concurrence with Providence, brings them to a better temper. Ver. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

When they see themselves naked and indigent, enslaved and undone; when they *come to themselves*, and recover the exercise of their reason, improving it to the only purposes for which it would have been worth while to have received it;—then they feel the pangs of *penitential remorse;* then they remember the *blessings* they have lost, and attend to the misery they have incurred. And hereupon they are disposed humbly to confess their folly, and to prostrate themselves in the presence of their *heavenly Father:* they put the resolution immediately into practice; *they arise and go* unto him. 17, 18, 19

But oh, let us behold with wonder and pleasure the *gracious reception* they find from Divine injured goodness! He *sees them afar off;* he *pities*, he *meets*, and *embraces* them; he interrupts their complaints and acknowledgments with tokens of his returning favour. *Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord;* (Jer. xxxi. 20.) Thus does God welcome the humble *penitent;* thus does he open the arms of his love to embrace him, and the treasures of his bounty to enrich him. 20, 21

SECT. CXXIII. him. He arrays him with *the robe* of a *Redeemer's righteousness*, dresses him in the ornaments of *sanctifying grace*, honours him
22, 23 with the tokens of *adopting love*, and invests him with the glorious privileges and immunities of his *children*. And all this he
24 does with unutterable *delight: he rejoices over him with joy; he rests in his love*, and, as it were, *rejoices over him with singing* (Zeph. iii. 17); and this is the joyful language of the song, My children *that were dead, are alive again*; and though they *were lost*, they *are found*.

25, 32 Let heaven and earth unite in the *joy*, and echo back the song. Let no *elder brother* murmur at the *indulgence* with which these *prodigals* are treated; but rather welcome them back into the family, and even encourage every thing that looks like a disposition to return to it. And let those who have been thus received, wander no more; but rather let them emulate the strictest piety of those, who for *many years* have *served* their *heavenly Father*, without having in any notorious instances *transgressed his commandments*.

SECT. CXXIV.

Christ delivers the parable of the unjust steward, and reproves the Pharisees for their covetousness and hypocrisy. Luke XVI. 1—18.

LUKE XVI. 1.

SECT. CXXIV. OUR Lord then spake another parable, by which he intended to convince his hearers of the necessity of making a right use of their
Luke XVI. 1. worldly enjoyments; *and*, having before rebuked the Pharisees for their envious and uncharitable temper, *he said also to his disciples* that were about him, *There was a certain rich man who had a steward*, in whom he had long put great confidence; *and he was* at last *accused to him, as having wasted his goods* which had been intrusted
2 to his care. *And calling him, he said unto him, What is this* strange account *that I hear of thee?* Can it be true that thou hast acted so unjust and base a part? *Give an* immediate and exact *account of thine administration* and management in this office; *for thou canst be no longer steward*, with any honour to thyself, or satisfaction to me, while thou continuest under such imputations and suspicions as these.

3 *And* upon this, as might be well imagined, *the steward* was much alarmed, and *said within himself*,

LUKE XVI. 1.

AND he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods.

2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

3 Then the steward said within himself, What

SECT. CXXIV.

Luke XVI. 3.

What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed,

himself, in the reasonings of his own mind, *What shall I do* in this unhappy situation of my affairs? *for my lord is taking away my stewardship*, and with it I shall lose my subsistence. *I am not able to dig*, or to apply myself to any other laborious work of husbandry[a]; nor can I expect, under this load of infamy, to be trusted by another in the business I have been accustomed to; [*and*] *I am* utterly *ashamed to beg* my bread, after having lived so handsomely in the world thus long.

4 I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

And, after a pause, he added, 4 *I* have at length bethought myself, and now *know what I will do*; an expedient offers itself to my mind by which I may secure myself friends, so *that when I am removed from my office, they may receive me into their houses.*

5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

And, in pursuance of this scheme, *having called every one of his lord's debtors to him* whom he could hope to oblige by so fraudulent a proposal, 5 *he* determined to lower the several articles in his book which stood chargeable to the account of each; and *said*, for instance, *to the first, How much owest thou to my lord? And he said, An*

6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty,

6 *hundred baths of oil*[b]. *And he said to him, Take thy bill*, in which thou hast acknowledged the receipt of it[c], *and sit down directly, and write* another,

[a] *I am not able to dig*, or to apply myself to—husbandry.] *Raphelius (Annot. ex Xen.* p. 104, 105), and *Elsner (Observ.* Vol. I. p. 251), have shewn that the word σκαπτειν signifies, in general, *to cultivate the land*, and especially *to prepare it for seed*; which was one of the most laborious parts of the husbandman's work in which *day-labourers* were employed; and consequently most fit to be mentioned by *this steward*, who, having been used to a delicate and luxurious way of living, would naturally think of such a change of life in the most discouraging view. The expression, ουκ ισχυω, *I am not able*, or strong enough, to do it, has also a peculiar beauty in this view, which is lost in *our translation*, and in most others.

[b] *An hundred baths of oil.*] The *Greek* word βαθος is evidently derived from the *Hebrew* בַּת, which we render *baths* in the *Old Testament*. (1 Kings vii. 26. 2 Chron. ii. 10. Ezra vii. 22.) According to Bishop Cumberland it contained about *seven gallons, two quarts, and half a pint*. Compare *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. viii. cap. 2. § 9.—*The measure of wheat*, κορος, mentioned in the *next verse*, is the כּוֹר, *cor*, or *homer* of the *Hebrews*, containing about *eight bushels and an half*, Winchester measure. The word *homer* being familiar to an *English* ear, I have retained it in the *version*. This *homer* contains *ten ephahs*, or *baths* (Ezek. xlv. 11, 14.) and each of these latter *ten omers* (Exod. xvi. 36). *Twenty homers*, which he allowed the debtor to deduct, would on this computation contain 170 *bushels of wheat*, and might be as valuable as *fifty baths*, or about 378 *gallons of oil*; so that the obligation conferred on both these debtors might be equal.

[c] *Take thy bill*, in which thou hast acknowledged the receipt of it.] This *bill* probably was something equivalent to *a note under his hand*, acknowledging the *receipt* of so much *oil*, and promising payment for it. The *alteration* of this plainly shews, how much Dr. Clarke is mistaken in supposing *the steward* did no wrong to *his master* in this affair, but only gave the *debtors* the value of what he set off out of his own stock, he undertaking to pay *his lord*. (See *Dr. Clarke's Sermons*, Vol. III. p. 285.) For not to say how improbable it is that this bankrupt should be able or willing to make such a considerable present, it is plain that, if he had intended it,

SECT. CXXIV.

another, in which thou shalt acknowledge the receipt of but *fifty*, and I will alter my book agreeable to that *Then he said to another, And how much dost thou owe? And he said, An hundred homers of wheat. And he says to him, Take thy bill* back, *and write* down an acknowledgment of but *fourscore;* and remember how easy I have made thine account.

Luke XVI. 7.

7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

8 *And* when *the master* heard of it, though he could not but be sensible that it was an act of great injustice, yet he *praised the unjust steward, as having done prudently* however, and found out an artful expedient for his subsistence, by making friends, who might shelter him for the present, and perhaps recommend him to some new trust, in hopes of sharing again in the spoils of his dishonesty. And *thus*, said the blessed Jesus when he had concluded the parable, *the children of this world are wiser in their* way and *generation*[d], that is, they generally act a more prudent part with respect to their secular interests, *than* even those who may be called *the children of light*, or than good men themselves, who are enlightened by God to see where their true happiness lies, do with respect to theirs, which are so much more important (compare John xii. 36. 1 Thes. v. 5. and Eph. v. 8.) for they seldom appear so thoughtful and active in the great concerns of religion as worldly men are in pursuit of the momentary and precarious possessions of this present life.

8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

9 *And I* also *say to you*, Endeavour to *make yourselves* sure *friends with* these riches which may not improperly be called *the unrighteous* or deceitful *mammon*[e] (as so little confidence can be

9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon

he would have let the account remain *unaltered*. But by the *exchange of bills* he cunningly made each of the *debtors* an accomplice with him in defrauding *his lord*, and thereby provided against a discovery.

d *In their generation.*] It here signifies *affairs*, or *actions;* as Gen. vi. 9. xxxvii. 2.

e *The unrighteous* or deceitful *mammon.*] Nothing can be more contrary to the whole genius of the *Christian* religion than to imagine that *our Lord* would exhort men to lay out their *ill-gotten goods* in works of *charity*, when *justice* so evidently required they should make restitution to the utmost of their abilities.—*Mammon*, or *wealth*, is here called *unrighteous*, or *deceitful*, on account of its being so apt to fail the expectation of the owners; and in that view is opposed to *true riches*, ver. 11.—*The mammon of unrighteousness* is plainly such a *hebraism* as the *steward of unrighteousness*, ver. 8. and *the judge of unrighteousness*, chap. xviii. 6. *Gr.* which *our translators* have with perfect fidelity changed into the *unjust steward* and the *unjust judge;* and had they taken the same liberty in many other places, they had made many *scriptures* plainer than they now appear to an *English* reader.—See *Elsner, Observ.* Vol. I. p. 252, where he has shewn that αδικια signifies *unfaithfulness*, on which account it is often opposed to *truth*. Compare Rom. i. 18. ii. 8. and Deut. xix. 19. Mic. vi. 12. *Heb.*

f *That*

mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

be reposed in them); *that when you fail*, and die out of this world[f], *they may receive you into everlasting habitations*, and you may for ever enjoy the reward of your pious charity and love, in an everlasting friendship with all those truly worthy persons who have been relieved by it. SECT. CXXIV. Luke XVI. 9.

10 He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.

Let this exhortation be regarded, not only by those that abound in wealth, but by all others: for *he who*, acting on strict principles of integrity and piety, *is faithful in the smallest* [*trust*], *is*, and would in fact appear to be *faithful also in* one of *much* greater importance if it were committed to him; *and he who is unjust in the least*, matter, *is*, if he can attempt it with views of impunity, *unjust also in much*. 10

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*?

If therefore it appears that *you have not been faithful in* the management of *the unrighteous* or deceitful *mammon*, as I before called those precarious treasures, *who will intrust you with the true* [*riches*]? *And* I repeat it again, *if you have not been faithful in what was* really *another's*, and only was committed to your care and management for a little while; *who* do you think *will give you* [*that which shall be*] *your own* by an unalienable right and eternal possession[g]? You cannot sure expect so high a reward without a behaviour correspondent to it. 11

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

But, as I formerly have said, I tell you now again, *No domestic* whatever *can serve two* different *masters; for he* assuredly *will either hate* and despise *the one, and love the other; or* at least *he will adhere to* the commands of *the one, and neglect* those of *the other:* so, in like manner, *you cannot* faithfully *serve God, and* yet at the same time be the servant of *mammon*, having your hearts engrossed by worldly interests and pursuits. (Compare Mat. vi. 24. Vol. VI. p. 227.) 12 13

14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous,

And the Pharisees also, who were extremely *covetous*, stood by and *heard all these things; and they* contemptuously *derided him*[h] as a poor visionary, 14

[f] *That when you fail*, and die out of this world.] It is with apparent propriety that *our Lord* suggests the thoughts of *death* as an antidote against *covetousness*. Strange it is that so many on the very borders of the grave should be so wretchedly inslaved to that unreasonable passion!

[g] *If you have not been faithful in what was another's*, &c.] This is well expressed, though not exactly rendered, in the *version* of 1727. *If you have embezzled what another gave you in trust, how can he give you an estate in perpetuity?* It probably alludes to a custom of rewarding *faithful stewards*, by giving them some part of the estate they have managed.

[h] *They derided him.*] The word ἐξεμυκτήριζον might more exactly be rendered, *they sneered*

SECT. CXXIV.

visionary, who did not understand human life, or only appeared to despise the world, because (as they supposed) it was out of his reach.

Luke XVI. 15. *And he said to them, You* Pharisees *are they that justify yourselves before men*, and find out a great many plausible excuses for possessing and pursuing the world as you do; *but God knows your hearts*, and knows that it is not by love to him, but to yourselves, that you are animated, even in the most specious and pompous of your actions: *for that which is highly esteemed among men is*, in many instances, *an abomination before God*, who observes the vile purposes from which it often proceeds, and cannot be imposed upon by any glittering misrepresentation or disguise.

16 (Compare 1 Sam. xvi. 7.) But a dispensation is now opening upon the world which will put you to deserved shame; for *the law and the prophets* [*were*] the only Divine revelation among you *until John* the Baptist appeared; but *from that time the kingdom of God is* publicly and plainly *preached, and every one forces his way into it*[1]; for considerable numbers, notwithstanding all your sophistry, stand well disposed to receive it, and are willing to secure its blessings at any rate. (Compare Mat. xi. 12, 13. Vol. VI.

17 p. 306.) *Yet* I would not be understood as if I intended by what I say to put any slight on former revelations; for I rather establish and vindicate them, and again declare it to you as a most solemn truth, That *it is* much *easier for heaven and earth to pass away*, and the whole system of created nature to be destroyed, *than for one tittle of the law* of God *to fail*, or the least precept of it to be set aside as faulty. (See Mat.

18 v. 18. Vol. VI. p. 205.) And, far from doing any thing to lessen or abate the force of it, I rather assert it in its utmost extent and spirituality; insomuch that you know I have before declared, notwithstanding all your boasted, but dangerous, traditions, that *whosoever puts away his wife, and marries another*, unless it be on account of a breach of the most fundamental article of the

covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God.

16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

17 And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth

ed. There was a gravity and dignity in *our Lord's* discourse which, insolent as they were, would not permit them to *laugh out*; but by some *scornful air* they hinted to each other their mutual contempt: and they have, no doubt, seriously answered for it, as others of their temper and character will.

[1] *Forces his way into it, εις αυτην βιαζεται.*] Some think this intimates that those who should have been readiest to *open the door*, rather attempted to *keep them out*: it certainly implies that there were *strong obstacles* in the way.

rieth her that is put away from *her* husband, committeth adultery.

the marriage-covenant, *commits adultery; and whosoever marries her that is put away from her* former *husband* for any less important cause, *commits adultery* with her, as the first contract still continues in force by which she is the wife of another. (Compare Mat. v. 32. Vol. VI. p. 212.) SECT. CXXIV. Luke XVI. 18.

IMPROVEMENT.

MAY *the wisdom* of *the children of this world* in their comparatively trifling concerns excite a holy emulation in *the children of light!* Is it not much better worth our while to employ all the attention of our thoughts in observing opportunities for the good of our souls, and to exert all the force of our resolutions in improving them, than to *labour* merely for the *meat which perishes*, for that *deceitful mammon*, that treacherous *friend*, which will at best only amuse us for a few years, and will for ever forsake us in our greatest extremity. Ver. 8, 9

Let us take occasion, from *this parable*, to think how soon we must part with all our present possessions; how soon we must *give an account* of our respective *stewardships* as those who must be *no longer stewards*. Let us therefore manage them in such a manner as may most effectually promote the great purposes of our everlasting happiness. To this end, let us remember how absolutely necessary it is that we abound in works of *charity* and *benevolence*, and that we endeavour to abstract our hearts from an over-eager attachment to these *lying vanities;* for surely the trifles of earth are no better. Let us not imagine that our particular address can find out the secret of *serving God and mammon*, since *Christ* represents it as an impossibility and contradiction. 1, 2, 13

May we be found *faithful* in what God has committed to us, whether it be *little* or *much;* and govern ourselves, not by the maxims of this vain world, but by those of the gospel! And if the same temper that led the *covetous Pharisees* to *deride our Lord*, engage the children of this world to pour contempt upon us as *visionaries* and *enthusiasts*, we have much greater reason to be grieved for them than for ourselves. Their censures can be matter of but little account to us, when we consider that the things which are *highly esteemed by men* are often *an abomination in the sight of God.* His *law* is sacred, and the constitutions of his kingdom are *unalterable:* may the temper of our minds be so altered and disposed as may suit it! For another day, and another world, will shew that real *Christianity* is the only *wisdom;* and that all the refinements of human policy without it are but specious *madness* and laborious *ruin!* 10--12, 14, 15, 16--17

SECT.

SECT. CXXV.

Our Lord, to enforce the preceding admonition, delivers the parable of the rich glutton and Lazarus. Luke XVI. 19, *to the end.*

LUKE XVI. 19.

SECT. CXXV.

Luke XVI. 19.

THAT his hearers might be more effectually dissuaded from addicting themselves to worldly pursuits and carnal pleasures, Jesus added another parable, which might have been sufficient to convince the covetous Pharisees of their madness in deriding what he had before said. And he addressed himself to them in words to this effect: *There was a certain rich man who* lived in the greatest elegance and pomp; for he *wore* robes of *purple, and* vests of *fine linen, and daily feasted in a* very *splendid* and luxurious *manner.* *And there was* in the same place *a certain poor man named Lazarus*[a], a person indeed of eminent piety, but in the utmost indigence and distress; *who* being unable to labour, or so much as to walk, *was laid* down *at his gate*, to beg the rich man's charity; and all his body being *full of* sores and *ulcers*, he was a most miserable spectacle: *And*, being almost famished with hunger, *he* earnestly *desired to be fed*, if it were but *with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; yea*, he was in so exposed and abandoned a condition, that *the* very *dogs came and licked his sores*,[b] which lay uncovered in the open air.

LUKE XVI. 19.

THERE was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.

20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores,

21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

But

a *A certain poor man named Lazarus.*] An exceeding proper *name*, which seems (as Lud. Cappellus observes) to be derived from לא עזר, *lo azer*, and signifies *a helpless person*; an *etymology* on all accounts much more natural than that so generally followed, which derives it from *Eliezar, God is my helper.*—Some have imagined, from the name Lazarus, and the particular detail of circumstances, that this was an *history*, rather than a *parable*; but this must be a groundless supposition, as it is plain the incidents are *parabolical.* But this criticism of Lomeirus, who explains it as a mystical representation of the *Jewish* and *Gentile church*, is far more extravagant.—Dr. Lightfoot, and others, have shewn, that the Jews in their *Gemara* have *a parable* much to the same purpose.

b *Yea, the dogs came and licked his sores.*] Had the connection in the *original* been attended to, I think there could have been no debate among *commentators*, whether this were mentioned as an alleviation, or an addition to his calamity. For however lenient and healing the *tongue* of a *dog* may be in such cases, the words αλλα και should be rendered, *yea*; as Erasmus, Beza, Schmidius, and Calvin contend, and, above all, *Raphelius* abundantly proves. (*Annot. ex Xen.* p. 106, 107.) The circumstance is surely recorded, to shew that *his ulcers lay bare*, and were not (as Isaiah in another case expresses it, chap. i. 6.) *either closed, or bound up, or mollified with ointment.*—Some *versions* add, that *no man gave unto him*; which Grotius thinks is intimated in his *wishing to be fed with the crumbs* which *the dogs* used to gather; (Mat. xv. 27.) If so, it was with singular propriety that he who denied *a crumb* is represented as unable to obtain *a drop*; but as it is not expressed in the Greek, either here, or in Abraham's reply, I did not choose to insert it. *Giving alms* will be no security to those that live a sensual life.

c *Carried*

22 And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried.

SECT. CXXV.

Luke XVI. 22

But so it was, that in a little time *the* poor *beggar*, worn out with the load of so great a calamity, *died; and*, being a favourite of heaven, notwithstanding all his distresses on earth, he *was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom*, the abode of happy spirits in a separate state [c]: *the rich man also died* quickly after him; for all his riches were not sufficient to procure the least continuance of his life; *and* he *was buried* with great funeral solemnity and pomp. But observe the difference of their circumstances beyond the grave. This poor sensual creature was by God's righteous vengeance condemned to everlasting misery; *and in the unseen world* [d], *being in* the midst of *torments*, aggravated by all the indulgence and delicacy of his former life, *he lifted up his* weeping and despairing *eyes, and saw Abraham from afar, and* the poor despised *Lazarus* lying *in his bosom*, as a newly received guest at the heavenly banquet, placed next the father of the faithful himself.

23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

23

24 And he cried, and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

And calling out with the greatest earnestness and importunity, *he said, O father Abraham, have compassion upon me*, a poor unhappy descendant of thine, *and send Lazarus*, not to reach out to me any of the dainties of heaven, for I presume not to ask so great a favour, but only to bring me a little water; and if I may not have a draught of it, I should be thankful if he might be permitted *to dip the tip of his finger in water to refresh my tongue* [e], though it were but for

24

[c] *Carried by angels into Abraham's bosom.*] The Jews assign this office to *angels* (see *Drusius in loc.*) and, no doubt, with the utmost propriety, considering how suitable it is to their benevolent nature, and to the circumstances of a *departed spirit*. The Greeks (as *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 255. and many others have observed) assign *guides* to the *souls of the dead*, to conduct them to their respective seats.—It is strange any should render τον κολπον του Αβρααμ, *Abraham's bower*, or (with Jac. Cappellus) *Abraham's haven*. Our translation is in all respects much more just. It alludes to the way of representing the *entertainments of heaven*, by sharing a magnificent *banquet* with Abraham, and the other *patriarchs*, (compare Mat. viii. 11. and Luke xxii. 30.) And nothing can better describe the honour and happiness of Lazarus, who had *lain* in so wretched a condition *before the glutton's gate*, than telling us that he was placed next to Abraham, and so *lay in his bosom*. (Compare John xiii. 23. sect. clxx.) Thus Casaubon and Grotius well explain it.—As for *the rich man's seeing him there*, Mr. L'Enfant thinks the Jews borrowed this manner of speaking from the Greeks, who described the *seats of the blessed* as *separated* from those of *the damned* by a great impassable *river*, from the opposite banks of which they might converse. Many of them also expressly speak of *a great chasm* interposed. See *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 256, 257, and *Grotius in loc.*

[d] *In the unseen world.*] This seems generally the sense of the Greek word, αδης, as was observed before, in *note* f, on Mat. xvi. 18. Vol. VI. 462.—Both the *rich man* and Lazarus were in Hades, though in different regions of it. See Grotius's learned and judicious *note* here.

[e] *Dip the tip of his finger in water*, &c.] The

SECT. CXXV.

Luke XVI. 24

a moment; *for I am* so *tormented in this flame*, that it excites an intolerable thirst, which is continually raging and preying on my very soul.

25 *But Abraham said*, with awful and inflexible severity, *Son, remember* the former days when thou and Lazarus were upon earth, *that thou didst* then *in thy life-time receive thy good things* which thou wast so foolish as to choose for thy portion, in the neglect of God and of thy soul; *and likewise Lazarus* then received [*his*] *evil things*, of which thou wast witness: *but now* the scene is changed, so that *he* in his turn *is comforted, and thou art* justly *tormented;* and neither his joy, nor thine anguish, can admit of

26 any end or interruption. *And besides all this*, as to the favour thou desirest from the hand of Lazarus, it is a thing impossible to be granted; for *between us and you there is a great chasm fixed;* a vast unmeasurable void is interposed; *so that they who would go from hence to you*, if any should be so compassionate as to desire to help you, *cannot; neither can they who are there come unto us;* but we are still to continue at an unapproachable distance from each other.

27 *Then* the rich man, as *he* perceived that his own case was irretrievable, *said* unto Abraham, There may however be a passage from you to the other world, as it is plain there is from thence to you; *I beseech thee therefore, O Father, that thou wouldst* please to *send him to my father's house*, on an errand of the utmost importance;

28 *For I have* there *five brethren*, thoughtless young creatures like myself, who are now revelling on those possessions which were once mine [f] and are likely ere long to fall into the same misery with me: I earnestly entreat thee therefore *that he may* be sent to *testify to them* the reality and importance

25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou are tormented.

26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulph fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence.

27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house;

28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

The Hebrews drank their *wine* mingled with *water;* and large quantities of *water*, on one occasion or other, were used at their *feasts*; (see John ii. 6.) There seems therefore in this petition a proper *allusion* to that.—*Archbishop Tillotson* observes, with his usual vivacity, that this is the only instance we meet with in *scripture* of any thing that looks like a *prayer* put up to a *glorified saint*, (*Tillots. Works*, Vol. II. p. 142.) and even here the application was in vain, and no relief was *the saint* capable of giving.—It is observable, the *rich man speaks* as *knowing Lazarus*, and as supposing (ver. 28.) that *his brethren* also might *know him* on his appearing to them.

[f] *I have five brethren*, &c.] As no mention is made of any surviving *wife* and *children*, but *his five brethren* are described as living still together in his *father's house*, one would imagine that *our Lord* intended to represent this wretched creature as *a young man*, who (unhappily for himself, like many *modern rakes*,) coming early to the possession of his estate, soon broke his constitution by debauchery, and so left his riches to the younger children of the family, having *no other heirs*.

portance of this invisible world, *that they* may be awakened to avoid those evil courses that have been my ruin, and *may not also come into this place of torment.* SECT. CXXV. Luke XVI. 28

29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

But *Abraham said* in reply *to him*, Thou knowest *they have* an excellent Divine revelation in the writings of *Moses and the prophets; let them* but *hearken to* the warnings and instructions that are given by *them*, and they have means sufficient to secure them from that danger. 29

30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

And when the poor tormented creature found this also was objected to, *he* pleaded still in their behalf, and *said, Nay, father Abraham*, they will slight these as I foolishly did; *but* surely *if one go to them from the dead, they* cannot withstand so awful a messenger, but *will* undoubtedly *repent*, and reform their lives. 30

31 And he said, unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

But Abraham put an end to the discourse, with an assurance of the fruitlessness of any such extraordinary means for their conviction; and *he said to him*, The evidences of the Divine revelation are such, *that if they hearken not to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded* to a thorough repentance and reformation *though one should arise from the dead* to visit them[s]. For though it might indeed alarm them for a time, the same prejudices and lusts which led them to despise those methods of instruction that God has given them, would also lead them ere long to slight and forget such an awful apparition as you desire they might see. 31

IMPROVEMENT.

MOST evidently may we learn from *this parable*, that it is impossible to *know either love or hatred by any thing that is before us under the sun;* (Eccles. ix. 1.) Who that had seen the pomp and plenty of this *rich sinner*, and compared it with the indigence Ver. 19--21

[s] *If they hearken not to Moses*, &c.] It is true, Moses no where expressly asserts *a future state of rewards and punishments*; yet the facts recorded by him strongly enforce the natural arguments in proof of it; and *the prophets* speak plainly of it in many places. See Psal. xvi. 9, 10, 11. xvii. 15. xxiii. 6. xlix. 14, 15. lxxiii. 17. *& seq.* Prov. xiv. 32. Eccles. iii. 17, 21. xi. 9. xii. 7, 13, 14. and Ezek. xviii. 19, 20, 21.—*Bishop Atterbury* has excellently shewn the justice of *Abraham's assertion* here, in his incomparable discourse on *this text*. (See his *Sermons*, Vol. II. serm. 2.) The impenitence of many who *saw* another *Lazarus, raised from the dead*, (John xi. 46.) and the wickedness of the *soldiers* who were *eye-witnesses* to the *resurrection of Christ*, and yet that very day suffered themselves to be *hired* to bear a *false testimony* against it. (Mat. xxviii. 4. 15.) are most affecting and astonishing illustrations of this truth: for each of those *miracles* was far more convincing than such an *apparition* as is here referred to would have been.

SECT. CXXV.

gence and misery of *Lazarus*, would have imagined that the latter had been *the child*, and the former *the enemy, of God?* But let us *judge nothing before the time;* (1 Cor. iv. 5.) Our *Lord Jesus Christ* shews us the *period* of all the prosperity of the wicked, and of all the calamities with which good men may be exercised. And what availed the *luxuries of life*, or the magnificence of *burial*, to a wretch *tormented in flames?* Surely the fierceness of those *flames* would be proportionable to the *luxury* in which he had formerly lived, and the sense of his *torment* be heightened by the *delicacy* he had once indulged. May God awaken those unhappy persons, whatever their rank in the present life may be, who place their happiness and glory in being *clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day!* May they *lift up* their enchanted deluded *eyes*, and see that pointed *sword* of the Divine vengeance which is suspended over them by so weak a thread; and may they take this warning from one *greater than Moses and the prophets*, from one that *came from the dead* to enforce it, that they pass not *into that place of torment!*

Luke XVI. 21, 23, 24

22 Let *poor afflicted saints* take comfort in what has now been read, though they may be despised and slighted by men. The time will shortly come, when those *angels* who now descend in an invisible form to *minister to them*, will appear as their *guard* to convoy them to the regions of glory. *Abraham's bosom*, will be opened to them, and the dainties of heaven be set before multitudes, who, perhaps, while on this side the grave, hardly knew how to procure even the necessaries of life.

23

May we never view those *seats of glory*, as this wretched *sensualist* did, at an *unapproachable distance!* Let us think seriously of his deplorable circumstances, when he asked *a drop of water* from *the tip of Lazarus's finger*, and yet was *denied*. Dreadful representation! yet made by *Christ* himself, who surely knew how to describe the case with the utmost propriety. Behold, O our souls, this *son of Abraham*, in that flaming prison, in all the restless agonies of torment and despair: and we may judge what dependance to place on a *descent from pious ancestors*, or a participation of external privileges.

25

27, 28 We enquire not curiously into the *motives* which engaged him to request that so extraordinary a *warning* might be sent to *his brethren;* whether it might proceed from a remainder of natural affection, from a fear of meeting them in the same misery, or from a mixture of both. It is enough to observe how and upon what principles it was denied, *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.* Let none vainly excuse themselves from believing the evidence of the *revelation* God has given, on a pretence that *if they*

31

saw

saw signs and wonders they would believe. The heart of man may be hardened against the most sensible and immediate miracle; but if that evidence were irresistible, it would ill become us to dictate to God when and to whom it should be given. Let us examine and acquiesce in such as he has seen fit to afford; and pass through our various scenes of life as those that have eternity in view, and are persuaded we must each of us, in a few years at farthest, be with *Lazarus in Abraham's bosom*, or with *the rich man in that* tormenting *flame.* SECT. CXXV. Ver 29

SECT. CXXVI.

Christ repeats his exhortations to an inoffensive conduct and a forgiving temper; and warns his disciples not to arrogate any merit to themselves. Luke XVII. 1—11.

LUKE XVII. 1.

THEN said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe *unto him* through whom they come.

LUKE XVII. 1.

OUR Lord also about this time repeated to the numerous attendants who were *then* around him several things which *he* had formerly *said* in a more private way *to the disciples;* and particularly addressed them in terms like these: Considering the general corruption of human nature, the snares of the world, and the temptations of Satan, *it is impossible but* one way or other *offences should come;* many professing my religion will, no doubt, act unworthy of themselves, and disgrace the holy name they bear: *Nevertheless, woe* [*be to him*] *by whom they come;* and let me warn you therefore, as you love your own souls, to guard against the guilt and danger of being a stumbling-block to others. For I assure you, *it were better* for such a one, even *for him* that by an immoral life proves a reproach and scandal to my cause, *that* he should die by the hand of violence, and suffer the most shocking execution; yea, that *a huge mill-stone should be hanged about his neck, and he* should *be thrown into the sea, than that he should offend* and insnare *one of these little ones* that believe in me, so as to draw the meanest of them into sin and ruin. (See Mat. xviii. 6, 7. and the notes there, sect. xciii. Vol. VI. p. 488, 489.) SECT. CXXVI. Luke XVII. 1.

2 It were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

3 Take heed to yourselves:

Take heed to yourselves therefore[a], that you may

[a] *Take heed to yourselves.*] This contains a strong and important intimation, how much sin, and scandal is occasioned, by a severe quarrelsome temper in the disciples of *Christ;* as it not only stirs up the corruptions of those with whom they contend, but leads others to think meanly of a profession, which has so little efficacy, to soften, and sweeten the tempers, of those who maintain it.

SECT. CXXVI.

Luke XVII. 3.

may govern all your passions aright, and particularly your resentments by which otherwise much sin may be occasioned, both to yourselves and others. *And if thy brother trespass against thee*, do not lay up a secret grudge against him for it, but plainly and faithfully *rebuke him*, endeavouring to convince him of the evil he has committed; *and if he* appear to *repent* of his fault, *forgive him* immediately, without insisting on any rigorous satisfaction. *And if he trespass against thee* again and again, even though he should repeat his fault, *seven times in a day*, (compare Psal. cxix. 164.) *and seven times in a day return to thee*, seriously, *saying*, *I repent* of my folly, and am heartily sorry for the injury I have done thee; *thou shalt forgive him* even these repeated offences. (Compare Mat. xviii. 21, 22. Vol VI. p. 498.)

selves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

5 *Then the apostles said unto the Lord*, Lord, we are sensible, that in this instance, as well as in several others, we have need to pray, thou wouldst *increase our faith*[b]: Oh quicken our apprehension of the reality and importance of the motives by which all thy commands are enforced, and of the authority by which they are dictated; that we may not scruple to submit even to such precepts as these, how hard soever they may bear upon flesh and blood.

5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

6 *And the Lord said*, *If you had* ever so little *faith*, though it were but *as a grain of mustard-seed*, yet (as I formerly told you,) it would conquer the greatest difficulties; so that *you might*, as it were, be able to *say to this sycamore tree*, *Be thou rooted up*, *and planted in the sea*, *and it should* presently *obey you*[c].

6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this sycamore-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you.

7 Endeavour therefore to live in the exercise of this noble grace, and in a series of such services as are the proper fruits of it: *But* in the midst of all, be careful to maintain the deepest humility, as in the presence of God your heavenly Master, on whom, as you are his servants, you can have no claim of merit: For *who* is there *of you*, *that* if he *has a servant ploughing* his ground,

7 But which of you having a servant plowing, or feeding cattle, will

[b] *Increase our faith.*] *Wolfogenius* himself acknowledges, that their applying to *Christ* to strengthen their *faith*, shews that they believed he had a Divine influence over the spirits of men. See *Whitby in loc.*

[c] *You might say to this sycamore-tree, &c.*] I do not apprehend *this text* to be entirely *parallel* to Mat. xvii. 20. Vol. VI. p. 480. In this connection the expression seems *proverbial*, and to be as if he had said, As the least degree of *miraculous faith* will (as I said before) produce the greatest effects, so the least degree of true *sincere piety* will finally bear a man above all opposition, and enable him to conquer the world.

Come

will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

8 And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

11 And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

ground, *or feeding his flock, will say unto him, as soon as he comes in from the field, Come in*[d], *and sit down at the table* with me? *Or will he not rather say to him,* if it was a part of that servant's business to do it, *Make ready* somewhat for *my supper, and* when it is prepared *gird up thy garments* close about thee[e], *and wait upon me, while I am eating and drinking; and afterwards thou shalt* sit down to *eat and drink* thyself? And suppose he should observe his orders with the greatest diligence, *does he* think himself obliged to *thank that servant, because he hath done what was commanded him? I apprehend* he does *not,* because he has an authority over the servant, and may justly claim his obedience as matter of debt. Now to apply this to your own services; *so likewise ye, when you have* faithfully *done all that was commanded you* in the exactest manner, yet should still *say, Surely we are* worthless and *unprofitable servants*[f], who cannot pretend to have merited any thing from the hand of our Master; *for we have done* no more than *what we were* by virtue of our relation to God, and dependance upon him, indispensably *obliged to do,* as much as any purchased slave is obliged to serve his master. And assure yourselves, that no services will be so pleasing to God, as those performed with such an humble spirit.

SECT. CXXVI. Luke XVII. 8.

9

10

These discourses, and those above mentioned, happened in our Lord's journey to the feast of the dedication[g]; *and as he went to Jerusalem* to attend it[h], *he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee,* taking those parts of Samaria in his way, which lay next to Galilee.

11

IMPROVE-

[d] *Come in.*] *Raphelius* proves, that the word παρελθων has often this sense. Compare Luke xii. 37. and Acts xxiv. 7. See *Raphel. Annot. ex. Herod.* p. 263, and especially *Annot. ex. Xen.* p. 108.

[e] *Gird up thy garments* close about thee.] Compare Luke xii. 37. Vol. VI. p. 581.— That servants used to be *girded* while waiting on their masters, is well shewn by *Elsner, Observ.* Vol. I. p. 258, 259. See *note* b on Luke xii. 35, Vol. VI. p. 581.

[f] *Unprofitable servants.*] The word αχρειος sometimes signifies *wicked;* (Rom. iii. 12. Mat. xxv. 30.) but in this connection it cannot have that sense. I entirely agree with *Heinsius,* that here, and 2 Sam. vi. 22. *Septuag.* it signifies *mean,* or *inconsiderable,* as the best of men certainly are.

[g] In our Lord's journey to the feast of the dedication.] See *note* a on Luke xiii. 23, sect. cxviii. and *note* a on Luke xiv. 1, sect. cxix.

[h] *As he went to Jerusalem.*] As Luke has related the *two little histories* contained in the *next section* at some distance from each other, it is very difficult (as the attentive reader will observe) to place them together without some *tautology.* I have therefore inserted the introduction to one of them at the end of *this section;* leaving out the word εγενετο, *it came to pass,* which is a mere *expletive;* or at most does only imply that what is mentioned in the context *happened in this journey,* or may refer to the discourses Christ had before delivered, as we have observed in the *paraphrase.*

a Near

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. CXXVI. LET us renew our guard against every thing in our conduct, which might *give offence* to the meanest and *weakest*; and against Ver. every thing, which might by a bad example mislead others, or fur- 1, 2 nish the enemies of religion with matter of reproach and accusa- 3, 4 tion against it. Let us imbibe the *forgiving* Spirit of the gospel, and bearing in mind the numberless instances in which God has forgiven us, though we have sinned against him *not only seven times, but seventy times seven*; let us *arm ourselves* in some degree *with the same mind*, and endeavour to *forbear, and forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake has* freely *forgiven us.* (Eph. iv. 32. and Col. iii. 13.)

5 In a sense of the weakness of our *faith*, let us pray to *Christ* to *increase* it; and then those duties will be discharged with ease and 7—10 delight, which appeared most difficult in a distant prospect. Yet when *faith* and *patience* have had their most *perfect work*, when our Master's will has been borne with the most entire submission, and done with the most zealous dispatch, let us not pretend to place any *merit* in our own actions or sufferings; but let us think of ourselves as the *servants* of God, yea, as *unprofitable servants*, whose *goodness extendeth not* to our Great Master: And to the riches of his grace let us ascribe it, that our feeble powers are strengthened to the performance of our duty; and that our worthless services are accepted, and the numberless deficiencies of them mercifully excused.

SECT. CXXVII.

Christ travelling through Samaria rebukes the intemperate zeal of James and John, against those who refused to grant him entertainment; and heals ten lepers. Luke IX. 51—56. XVII. 12—19.

LUKE IX. 51.

SECT. CXXVII. IT was observed in the close of the former section, that our Lord was now on his journey from Galilee, near the feast of the dedica- Luke IX. 51. tion[a]: *and it came to pass, that as the days were now*

LUKE IX. 51.

AND it came to pass, when the time was come

[a] Near the feast of the dedication.] Taking it for granted that the following word, αναλημψεως, refers to *Christ's ascension* (the reasons for which I shall give below), I think this the *only place* where *this little story* can properly come in. Most *harmonisers* place it just before the *feast of tabernacles* (of which we had an account in the *seventh* and *eighth chapters* of John, from sect. xcviii. to cv); and chiefly on their authority, without a critical examination, I had mentioned it in that connection

come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.

now almost *fulfilled in which* he knew *he should be received up* to heaven again[b], having dispatched the ministry which he was to discharge on earth; notwithstanding all the painful scenes through which he was yet to pass, his heart was so animated with a regard to his Father's honour and the salvation of men, and so cheered with the views of his own approaching exaltation and glory, that, in defiance of all his most inveterate enemies,

SECT. CXXVII.

Luke IX. 51.

tion in my *Sermon against Persecution*, But I am now convinced *that* could not be the time; not only as it would increase the difficulty, by supposing Luke then to say that *the time of his being received up was fulfilled*, though it must have been above *half a year* before his death; but chiefly because *that* was not the *last journey* he made from Galilee to Jerusalem, and because, (as we observed on John vii. 10, *note* h, Vol. VI. p. 511.) he made *that journey* with all possible *secrecy*; whereas *here* he had a train of attendants.—No *commentators* (on our interpretation of αναλημψεως) have, for the obvious reason hinted above, thought of placing it *higher*; and *lower* I think it cannot be brought: for though I was once strongly inclined to take the words in their *most literal sense*, and to conclude *this happened* when Christ was going from Galilee to Jerusalem just before his *ascension*, after having manifested his *resurrection* by his appearance to the *five hundred brethren*, 1 Cor. xv. 6. (compare Mat. xxviii. 7, 16—18; I have been obliged to give up *that hypothesis*, considering that he never *after his resurrection* appeared so *publicly* as in this story (compare Acts i. 3, x. 40, 41), and that he had then *no difficulties* to expect at Jerusalem against which he should *stedfastly set his face*.—And as for his journey to Jerusalem just before the *passover* at which he suffered, he went from *Ephraim near the wilderness* (John xi. 54), and *passed through Jericho* (Luke xix. 1), so that *Samaria* did not lie in his way. Nor is there, that I can find, any proof that he ever went back to Galilee, between the *feast of dedication* and his death; which I think sufficiently accounts for the use of the phrase of *the days* or time *being fulfilled*, &c.

b *As the days were fulfilled in which he should be received up: εν τω συμπληρουσθαι τας ημερας της αναλημψεως αυτου.*] In all the reasonings of the former *note* I have taken it for granted that αναλημψως here signifies Christ's being *taken up to heaven*: and this is so generally the signification of the word, that I wonder any learned men should have interpreted it in a different manner. Sir Isaac Newton, merely to suit with his *hypothesis* of preserving the *order of Matthew* unvaried, strangely supposes that this occurrence happened in the *first year* of Christ's preaching (*Newt. on the Prophecies*, p. 153), and interprets the passage before us as if αναλημψις were the same with αναδοχη, *a renewed entertainment*; which would make it no exact *date* at all, but might indifferently be applied to any other feast.—Heinsius confounds it with υψωσις, and interprets it of his being *lifted up* on the cross; though it is certain the ideas of being *lifted up* to a state of suspension, and *taken* or *received up*, are extremely different.—A learned friend, for whose judgment I have justly a great regard, observing that ληψις sometimes signifies a *seizure*, ingeniously conjectures that αναληψις may signify *Christ's being seized again*; imagining it may refer to a former seizure at Nazareth, Luke iv. 29; urging farther that αναλαμβανω signifies to *take again*, and referring (I think without sufficient evidence) to Acts xx. 13, 14, xxiii. 31, compared with ver. 10; and Eph. vi. 13, compared with ver. 11; in proof of it. But I beg leave, with all due deference, to observe, that συλλαμβανω is the word which Luke uses for *taking*, in the sense this worthy person supposes, as denoting *to seize* (compare Acts i. 16, and Luke xxii. 54); in which he is supported by the authority of Aristotle, Euripides, and the best *Greek Classics*. And therefore since the word is plainly used with reference to *Christ's ascension*, Mark xvi. 19; Acts i. 2, 11, 22; 1 Tim. iii. 16; as also to that of Elijah, 4 Kings ii. 10, 11, *Septuag.* and since in all the places referred to above it may be rendered by *taking up* (see *Grotius* on Mark xvi. 19), I scruple not at all, with the most *ancient versions*, and the generality of *critics*, to follow the usual interpretation which refers αναληψις to *Christ's ascension*; especially since no considerable difficulty would be removed by admitting any of the preceding different interpretations.—That the word *days* signifies no more than *time*, and is sometimes used to express what passes in an instant, is very evident from 3 Kings ii. 1, and Gen. xxv. 24, *Septuag.*

c As

SECT. CXXVII.

enemies, *he resolutely set his face to go up to Jerusalem*, though he knew it was the last journey he should take from Galilee thither, and that tortures and death awaited him there. *And* as his way lay through Samaria, being a stranger there, *he sent messengers before his face, who in their progress entered into a village of the Samaritans to prepare entertainment for him*; only desiring to take a lodging there, and to pay for their accommodation. *But* the Samaritans had such a national grudge against the Jews, that *they would not receive him*, nor grant him the common rites of hospitality due to any stranger *because his face was directed towards Jerusalem*; and they concluded, from the season of the year, that this visit was intended as a peculiar honour to the temple there [c].

Luke IX. 52. 52 And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him.

53 And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

54 *And when his disciples, James and John*, who attended him [d], *saw it, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we speak for fire to come down from heaven to destroy them, as Elijah did* with regard to his enemies (2 Kings i. 10, 12); for surely one word in such a case will do it, and the artillery of heaven will be much more ready to avenge such an affront offered to thee, who art so much superior to any of the prophets?

54 And when his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

55 *But* [*Jesus*] *turning* short upon them, *rebuked them* with a becoming severity, *and said, Ye know not what kind of spirit ye are of*; you neither consider the genius of the gospel, so much more gentle than that of the law, nor do you sufficiently know your own hearts; and if you were more diligently to examine them, you would soon find that there is a great deal of personal resentment and ostentation mingled with all that zeal for me which you so warmly express on this occasion. But I reject your motion

55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56 For the Son of man

[c] As a peculiar honour to the temple there.] None of the *feasts* observed at Jerusalem could be more remarkable in this view, as this was kept in commemoration of the *temple's* being purified, after it had been polluted by Antiochus Epiphanes, to whose idolatrous impositions the Samaritans had willingly offered to submit; as was observed before in *note* [g] on John iv. 9, Vol. VI. p. 162. *Josephus* observes (*Antiq.* lib. xx. cap. 6 (al. 5), § 1, & *Bell. Jud.* lib. ii. cap. 12 (al. 11), § 3), that the Jews going from Galilee to Jerusalem at their public feasts, took Samaria in their way; and it might be resented as something of an affront, considering the antipathy of the two nations.

[d] *James and John*, who attended him.] That these disciples, so remarkably distinguished by their Lord's favour, should have some distinguished zeal and faith, may seem less wonderful, than that a person of so sweet a disposition as John should make so severe a proposal. (Compare sect. xcvi. *Impr.* Vol. VI. p. 503.—The affinity which *this story* has to the other, with which Luke has connected it, is (as Grotius justly observes) a sufficient reason for his having thus transposed it.

man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village.

tion as absolutely unfit to be complied with; *for the Son of man came not* into the world to erect his kingdom by military force, or by any other method *to destroy men's lives, but to save them;* and therefore will exert his miraculous power in works of mercy and benevolence, and not of terror and vengeance. *And they* departed from that place, and *went on* till they came *to another village.*

SECT. CXXVII.

Luke IX. 56.

LUKE XVII. 12. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off.

And as he entered into a certain neighbouring *village, there met him ten men who were lepers,* and who on that account were shut out from the towns to which they belonged; and as in this miserable state they could have no society with any but themselves, both Jews and Samaritans

XVII. 12

13 And they lifted up *their* voices and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

conversed promiscuously together. *And standing afar off,* lest they should pollute passengers who might come too near them, *they lifted up their voice, and said* with great earnestness, having heard of the fame of Christ, *Jesus, Master,* we beseech thee to *have mercy upon us,* as thou hast already extended it to others in these deplorable circumstances. *And, seeing them* as they stood crying to him, *he said unto them, Go, shew yourselves to the priests;* intimating that the cure they desired should be performed by the way. *And it came to pass, that as they were going* in obedience to his word, *they were* all miraculously *cleansed* by the power of Christ, the efficacy of which was such as to operate at a distance as well as near.

13

14 And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that as they went they were cleansed.

14

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God;

And one of them, perceiving he was healed, was so affected with it, that he immediately *returned* with an heart full of gratitude and joy, *glorifying God with a loud voice,* and made a free and open acknowledgment of so signal a mercy.

15

16 And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

And, presenting himself before Jesus, *he fell down on his face at his feet, giving* the most affectionate *thanks unto him* as the immediate Author of his cure; *and* it is remarkable that *he was a Samaritan.*

16

17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where *are* the nine?

And Jesus observing it, *answered and said, Were there not ten* lepers *cleansed? but where* [*are*] *the* other *nine,* of whom it might have been expected, as they were Jews, that they should have expressed a greater sense of piety, and have been more ready to thank God for their deliverance? How is it, that of all who were cleansed *none are found who have returned to give glory to God but this* poor *stranger* to the commonwealth of Israel? *And he said to him, Arise,*

17

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

18

19 And he said unto

19

SECT. CXXVII.

Luke XVII. 19

Arise, go thy way; this *thy faith* in my power *has saved thee,* and been happily made the means of thy cure; and from these grateful sentiments, with which thy heart is filled, thou mayest conclude the cure thou hast received is given thee in mercy.

unto him, Arise, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.

IMPROVEMENT.

Luke ix. 53

WHO would not have imagined that the blessed *Jesus* should have been most cordially welcome wherever he came, when there was grace in all his words, and benevolence in all his actions? Yet these *Samaritans would not receive him* because he was a *Jew.* And thus do unhappy prejudices, taken up on imaginary grounds, against men, and things in the general, sometimes injure the best of men, and prove much more hurtful to the persons themselves by whom they are entertained.

54 The rash *disciples* would have *called for fire from heaven;* and let us observe how *Christ* treated the proposal. He treated it like himself; like the kind compassionate Friend of human nature; and also like one who well *knew what was in man,* (John ii. 25), and how little human terrors and severities can do towards producing a real conversion. Yet *fire from heaven* might have carried along with it some rational ground of conviction, which penal laws and sanguinary executions can never produce. What then would *Christ* have said to these *disciples* if they had themselves proposed to *smite with the sword,* or to *cast fire-brands*

55 into the house of these inhospitable men? Little do they *know their own spirit;* little do they understand either the true genius or the true interest of the gospel, who have recourse to such violent methods as these to extirpate heresy and to propagate truth. Let us bless God that neither the guilt nor the misery of such a conduct is ours.

Let us learn to *search our own hearts,* that we may form a thorough acquaintance with ourselves; which will greatly promote both the comfort and usefulness of life. Especially let us attend to our aims and intentions, and be greatly jealous over our own hearts, lest we indulge our irregular passions under religious pretences, and set up the standards of malice and pride *in the name of the Lord.*

Luke xvii. 12--16

From the story of the *ten lepers* let us learn importunately to seek the influences of *Christ,* to purge us from that far more odious and fatal disease which sin has spread over our whole nature; and, after the example of the *Samaritan,* let us *own the mercy* we have received. Have we not reason to fear that, of the multitudes

tudes who are indebted to the Divine goodness, there is *not one in ten* who has a becoming sense of it? Let us labour to impress our hearts deeply with such a sense. Let us remember what it is that God expects of us; and let us farther consider that, as the exercise of *gratitude* towards such a Benefactor is most reasonable, so also in proportion it is most delightful to the soul; it is indeed (as one well expresses it) like the *incense* of the *Jewish priest*, which, while it did an honour to God, did likewise regale with its own fragrancy the person by whom it was offered.

SECT. CXXVIII.

Our Lord cautions the Jews against expecting a pompous kingdom of the Messiah, and warns them of the approaching national destruction which would be the consequence of rejecting him. Luke XVII. 20, *to the end.*

LUKE XVII. 20.

AND when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come; he answered them, and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.

21 Neither shall they say, Lo here, or, lo there: for behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

22 And he said unto the disciples, The days will come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see *it*.

LUKE XVII. 20.

SECT. CXXVIII.

THUS our Lord went on in his journey, and at length came to Jerusalem. *And* it was about this time that, *being asked by* some of *the Pharisees*[a] *when the kingdom of God*, which he had so often mentioned as approaching, *should* actually *come; he answered them, and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with* that external pomp and *observation* of men which you expect. *Neither shall they* point to this or that remarkable place, and *say, Behold* [*it is*] *here, or, behold* [*it is*] *there. For behold*, and observe it attentively, *the kingdom of God is* already *among you*[b]: though, because it is an inward and spiritual kingdom, erected in the hearts of men, and not attended with outward grandeur, you overlook it as unworthy your regards.

Luke XVII. 20

21

And he afterwards *said to the disciples* apart, Though you do indeed undergo some present difficulties, in consequence of your adherence to me, yet you have so much greater extremities before you, that *the time will come when you shall wish to see one of these days of the Son of man and shall not see it;* and the whole Jewish nation having rejected Me, the true Messiah, shall yet long for the

22

a *Being asked by* some of *the Pharisees.*] I pretend not to say whether this was at Jerusalem or some neighbouring place; nor is it any way material to determine it.

b *The kingdom of God is among you.*] So I render the words ἐντὸς ὑμῶν, referring the reader to those exact *critics* in the *Greek* language, *Beza* and *Raphelius* (*Annot. ex. Xen.* p. 109, 110), for a more particular vindication of it. It is certain *our Lord* could not properly say the kingdom of God was *in* the Pharisees to whom he spoke, whose temper was entirely alienated from the nature and design of it.

SECT. CXXVIII.

the appearance of him whom they expect under that character, and eagerly listen to every one that pretends to it. *And* accordingly *they shall*

Luke XVII. 23 *say to you, Behold, [he is] here, or behold [he is] there; [but] do not you go out* on hearing such reports to seek him, *nor* join to *follow [them]* in

24 any of their vain delusive schemes. For he will indeed come, but in a very different manner from what they expect; even to execute upon them a sudden and unavoidable destruction: *for as the lightning which lightens from one [part] under heaven, shines* in a moment with the greatest swiftness *to the other [part] under heaven; so also* in as swift and terrible a manner *shall* the coming of *the Son of man be in his day*, when he appears to plead the cause of that gospel which has been so generally despised. (Compare Mat.

25 xxiv. 23, 27. sect. clxi.) *Nevertheless, he must first suffer many things, and be* yet more opprobriously and solemnly *rejected by this generation* of men, who shall by this public and national act of impiety and rebellion fill up the measure of their iniquities. (Compare Luke xxiii. 18—21. John xix. 15. Acts iii. 13—15.)

26 Then shall impending vengeance fall upon them at once: *and as it was in the days of Noah* which preceded the flood, *so also shall it be in the days of the Son of man*, or in those days when he shall come in the manner I have now described

27 for the destruction of his enemies. For, notwithstanding the express predictions of Divine judgments approaching, they went on with their usual course as if there were no danger; *they did eat, they drank, they married wives, [and]* their daughters *were given in marriage;* and with a confident security they persisted in the business, entertainments and luxuries of life, *till the* very *day in which Noah entered into the ark; and* then *the deluge came* with irresistible fury, so that it overbore *and destroyed them all* at once; (Gen. vi.

28 13. vii. 21.) *Likewise also as it was* at Sodom *in the days of Lot, they did eat and drink, they bought and sold, they planted* vineyards, *and built* magnificent houses, and never thought themselves more secure, or their pleasant country more

29 like to flourish; Thus did they carelessly go on, despising every admonition of their guilt and danger: *but on the* very *day when Lot went out of Sodom*, an horrible tempest of *fire and brimstone was rained down* by the Lord *from heaven, and*

23 And they shall say to you, See here, or, see there: go not after *them*, nor follow *them*.

24 For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one *part* under heaven, shineth unto the other *part* under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.

25 But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark: and the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded:

29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

and with a sudden overthrow *destroyed them all.* (Gen. xix. 14, 24.) *Even so shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed,* when he will sensibly display his power in the destruction of this sinful people: the Jewish nation shall be as careless and confident as if there was not the least danger, indulging themselves in all kinds of luxury and extravagance [c], till they shall see ruin surrounding them on every side, from which it will be as impossible for them to escape as it was for the sinners of the old world, or the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. (Compare Mat. xxiv. 37—39. sect. clxiii.)

30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

In that day, if any one shall be taking the air *on the house-top,* or be retired thither for any other purpose, *and his* best dress and *furniture be in the house, let him not come down* into the house *to take it away* [d]; but let him flee the readiest way by those steps which go down on the outside of the building: *and he that is* at work *in the field,* stripped of his upper garment, *let him likewise not return back,* though it be but a few steps to take it. (Compare Mat. xxiv. 17, 18, sect. clxi.)

31 In that day, he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

But *remember* the awful example of *Lot's wife,* with the dreadful issue of her delay and looking back, (Gen. xix. 26.) and take heed lest, like her, you perish in that sudden vengeance, which shall overtake your former abode, if you allow yourselves to linger in it, or turn back for the sake of any thing you have left there.

32 Remember Lot's wife.

For in that day, *he that shall seek to preserve his life* by retiring into some fortified city, and especially into that where it might seem he should be safest, *shall lose it; but he that shall* be thought to take the ready way to *lose his life, shall preserve it;* for they who regard my admonitions, and retire, however their conduct may be censured as imprudent, shall survive the general ruin.

33 Whosoever shall seek to save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life, shall preserve it.

I tell

c Indulging themselves in all kinds of luxury and extravagance.] It is not unseasonable for Great Britain to recollect, that when a pompous and *luxurious way of living* has come to its height in many of the most considerable ancient and modern nations, there has been a very sudden transition to the lowest state of *servitude* and *ruin.* All histories abound with instances of this kind; and God grant that our own age may not add one to the number!

d *Let him not come down* into the house *to take it away.*] This shews, beyond all controversy, that this discourse refers not to the *final judgment,* from which there can be *no escape;* but to the *destruction of Jerusalem,* from which it is well known that many Christians were preserved by this caution. See *Grotius in loc.*—The *Jewish houses* were built with a *flat roof,* and had stairs on the outside to go down from the top. Compare *note* e on Luke v. 19, Vol. VI. p. 247.

e *The*

SECT. CXXVIII. Luke XVII. 34

I tell you, in that night, that gloomy calamitous time, the Providence of God shall be strangely seen, in delivering some of my disciples, when others in the very same places and circumstances shall perish in the common calamity: *there shall,* for instance, *be two persons* lying *in the same bed;* and *the one shall be taken* by the enemy [e], *and the other dismissed. Two women shall be grinding together* at the same mill; *the one shall be taken, and the other dismissed.* And *two men shall be* working or walking together *in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other dismissed.* (Compare Mat. xxiv. 40, 41, sect. clxiii.)

34 I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.

35 Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

36 Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

And they answered and said to him, Where Lord, and to whom shall this destruction happen [f]? *And he said to them,* That common proverb is applicable to the present occasion, *Wheresoever, the carcase* [*is,*] *there will the eagles be gathered together* [g], wherever the impenitent and unbelieving Jews are, the vengeance of God will pursue them, and the Roman eagles shall (as it were) fly upon them as a helpless prey; and so, where their numbers are the largest, there the destruction will be greatest and most terrible. (Compare Mat. xxiv. 28, sect. clxi.

37 And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body *is,* thither will the eagles be gathered together.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 20 MAY our minds be formed to a true taste and relish for the *kingdom of God!* and may we learn wherein it *consists;* not, like the kingdoms of this world, in external pomp and splendor, but *in righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost,* and that inward subjection of soul to the Divine government which is the essence of religion, and the grand security and felicity of our natures! Many are, like the *Pharisees,* talking of it, and expecting it, 21 while it is *among them,* and they know it not; and, perhaps, despise the humble Christians *in whom* it resides, and most eminently

[e] *The one shall be taken* by the enemy.] That this is the sense of the word παραλημφθησεται, and that αφιθησεται in the latter clause should be rendered *dismissed,* or *let go,* I think *Elsner* has abundantly proved; *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 262, 263.—He has likewise shewn there, how customary it was for *women* to *grind at the mill.* See also *Bos, Exerc.* p. 30.

[f] *Where Lord,* &c.] I have seen few *paraphrases* which do not supercede this question; I have forbore mentioning Jerusalem above, that I might leave room for it.

[g] *Wheresoever the carcase is,* &c.] Dr. *Clarke* has explained the general sense of this *proverb* with great judgment. (See his *Seventeen Sermons,* p. 381. *& seq.*) It is, as if it had been said, *The like causes will produce the like effects.* But it seems to suggest so proper an allusion to the *Roman standards,* and to the carnage they made of the *Jews,* that I could not forbear introducing the mention of it.

nently triumphs. May they who think most lightly of it, never have cause to *wish* at last for the return of those *days of the Son of man*, which are now their burden, rather than their pleasure, while they hear vital and inward religion in vain recommended and enforced! SECT. CXXVIII. 22

What *our Lord* says of *his coming* to the destruction of *Jerusalem*, may be applied, as it is elsewhere, to his *appearance* at the *final judgment*, of which the former was a figure. Thus shall the men of *that generation* be immersed in business and pleasure; and that tremendous *day* shall *come upon them*, even *as a thief in the night*; so that they shall find themselves overwhelmed with irrecoverable ruin, while they cry, *Peace and safety*; (1 Thes. v. 2,3.) And thus doth the awful *hour of death*, which consigns men over to judgment, *surprise* the generality of mankind, while they are thoughtless of it and unprepared for its approach, amidst all the solemn warnings of it which they daily receive. May we be always in a prepared posture, and daily live as on the verge of eternity! 26--30

And if once we are engaged in a course of serious preparation, let us *remember Lot's wife*, and take heed that we *turn not back* again. We *flee as for our lives*; let us not *look behind us*. Whatever is to be *left*, whatever is to be *lost*, it is enough if our *life be given us as for a prey*. 32 31

If we have any just hope that it will be so given us, we have a great deal of reason to own and adore the riches of Divine grace to us, of that distinguishing grace which has *taken us* when others are *left*; some perhaps, employed in the *same business*, and dwelling in the *same place*; and, may not I add, some lying in the *same bed* too! 34--36

In a word, let all seriously bethink themselves, and *flee from the wrath to come*. God *spared not Judea*, that favourite country, when they rejected his gospel, and his Son: *let us fear, lest he also spare not us*; (Rom. xi. 20, 21.) In this respect also, *wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together*. The same causes will produce the same effects; and when we, in particular, of these happy, but sinful nations, consider our numerous and aggravated provocations, we shall see much greater reason to wonder that the *judgments of God* have been so long delayed, than that they should at last fall upon us with an insupportable weight. 37

SECT.

SECT. CXXIX.

Christ presses his disciples to perseverance in prayer by the parable of the importunate widow; and recommends humility by that of the Pharisee and publican. Luke XVIII. 1—14.

LUKE XVIII. 1.

SECT. CXXIX.

Luke XVIII. 1

THUS our Lord discoursed with his disciples of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; *and,* for their encouragement under those hardships, which they might in the mean time expect, from their unbelieving countrymen, or others; *he spake a parable to them;* which was intended to inculcate upon them this great truth, *that,* how distressed soever their circumstances might be, *they ought always to pray* with faith and perseverance, *and not to faint* under their trials.

2 For this purpose he discoursed to them in the following manner, *saying, There was a judge in a certain city, who neither feared God nor reverenced man;* but was wicked enough to set light by all regards to both, and to make his own humour and secular interest the only rule of 3 his actions. *And there was a widow in that city* who had sustained some injury from an enemy more powerful than herself; *and,* having no other way to obtain redress, *she came to him,* at a place and time when she could not be denied access, *and said,* I come to put myself under the protection of the law, and to demand thine assistance as a magistrate, to *do me justice against mine adversary,*[a] that I may not sink under his 4 oppressive attempts. This was her case *and* plea; yet as she brought no present in her hand, *he would not, for a* considerable *time,* take any notice of it: *but,* as she still persevered in her petition, *he afterwards said within himself, Though* indeed *I neither fear God, nor reverence man,* and therefore care not what becomes of this cause, or who has the right or the wrong of 5 it: *Yet because this* importunate *widow gives me trouble* by her continued application, *I will do her justice, lest,* by her *coming perpetually* to me with

LUKE XVIII. 1.

AND he spake a parable unto them, *to this end,* that men ought always to pray and not to faint:

2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man.

3 And there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by

[a] *Do me justice against mine adversary.*] This is the undoubted import of the phrase ἐκδίκησόν με: and care should have been taken in the *version* to express it so as not to suggest the idea of *revenge.*

b *She*

SECT. CXXIX.

Luke XVIII. 6

by her continual coming she weary me.

with this petition, *she* even stun and *weary me out* with her cries [b].

6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

And the Lord said, Hear, and observe, *what the unjust judge saith* upon this remarkable occasion, and how he owns himself to be prevailed on by the continual cries of one whom otherwise he would not have regarded.

7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

And if the earnest importunity of a poor widow thus prevailed on an unrighteous person, *shall not* a righteous *God* much more be moved to *vindicate his own elect*, his chosen and dearly beloved people, *that cry to him day and night*, under the cruel oppression of their insulting enemies, even *though he* may seem to *bear long with them*, to give them space for repentance [c]? Yes, *I say, unto you, He will* certainly *vindicate them*; and when he once undertakes it, he will do it *speedily* too; and this generation of men shall see and feel it to their terror. *Nevertheless, when the Son of man*, having been put in possession of his glorious kingdom, *comes* to appear for this important purpose, *will he find faith in the land* [d]? The persecution will be so severe as almost to bear it down: but let the remembrance of what I have now spoken be a comfort to my people, and a warning to those that injure them.

8 I tell you, that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves

He also spake this other *parable to certain* persons, *who*, like the proud self-justifying pharisees, with an arrogant conceit of their own merit,

[b] *She* even stun and *weary me out.*] The word ὑπωπιάζῃ is very emphatical, and signifies *to stun* or *beat down* by violent and repeated blows on the head. Compare 1 Cor. ix. 27.

[c] *Though he* may seem to *bear long with them*, &c.] The learned *Elsner* supposes μακροθυμων, with a small alteration in the *accent*, to correspond to βοωντων, and would render it, *Shall he not avenge his elect, who cry to him, and wait patiently for it*, that is, for his appearance in their favour? (*Elsner Observ.* Vol. I. p. 265, 266.) But, as I cannot think the words will naturally bear such a construction, or that the authorities he produces are satisfactory, I choose to retain *our version*. Nor can I, on this interpretation, perceive any inconsistency between ver. 7 and 8, since it is plain God might *wait long*, and yet at length execute a *speedy* and *sudden* vengeance on the persecuting enemies of his people. Compare Psal. lxxiii. 19, Hab. ii. 3. and especially Ecclus. xxxv. 18. to which words Grotius supposes there is an allusion here.

[d] *Will he find faith in the land?*] It is evident the word γη often signifies, not *the earth* in general, but some particular *land* or *country*; as in Acts vii. 3, 4, 11, and in numberless other places. And the *context* here limits it to the less extensive signification.—The believing Hebrews were evidently in great danger of being wearied out with their persecutions and distresses. (Compare Heb. iii. 12—14. x. 25—39. xii. 1—4. Jam. i. 1—4. ii. 6. v. 10. 1 Pet. ii. 20—25. iii. 14—17. iv. 1, 2, 12—19. v. 9, 10.)—Mr. *Fleming* argues from hence, that *deism* shall prevail very much toward the conclusion of the *Millenium* (*Christology*, Vol. II. p. 358.) but it is evident from the connection as stated above, that this cannot justly be inferred from *this text*; nor does the fact itself seem at all probable.

SECT. CXXIX.

merit, *trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and despised others* as reprobates.

selves that they were righteous, and despised others:

Luke XVIII.

There were, said he, *two men* who *went up to the temple to pray* there, chusing to offer up

10 their particular devotions at that sacred place; and *the one* of them was *a pharisee*, one of that sect so greatly honoured among you, *and the other a publican*, whom you are used to number

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 with the most contemptible of mankind. And *the pharisee standing by himself*, at as great a distance as he could from the miserable sinner, who had entered the temple with him, as if he feared being polluted by touching him, or any other person less holy than himself[e], *prayed in this manner, O God, I thank thee, that I am not as* the generality of *other men* are; but have always had the grace to withstand those vile temptations, which conquer and inslave them; so that I am not like the *rapacious, unjust, adulterous* generation among whom I live, *or even like this* wretched *publican*, that stands there at a distance, who probably is all this, and

11 The pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 more: Thou knowest, O Lord, that I am zealous in all the traditions of the elders; that in conformity to them *I fast twice a week*[f]; and with the greatest strictness *I pay tithes of all that I possess*, not excepting even the very herbs of my garden. (Compare Mat. xxiii. 23. and Luke xi. 42.) Thus the pharisee offered his devotions, standing as near as he could to the court of the priests; confident in his own distinguished sanctity, and desirous to be ob-

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 served by others. *But the* poor humble *publican standing afar off*, in the court of the gentiles, as unworthy to be numbered among God's people, and much more unworthy to appear in the presence of so holy a Deity, *would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven*, the habitation of the Divine holiness and glory, *but smote on his breast*, in token of the bitterest remorse and deepest humiliation, *saying, O God*, I intreat thee, *be merciful to me a* miserable *sinner*[g], who

13 And the publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

[e] As if he feared being polluted by touching him, &c.] Thus *Camero* well explains this clause. Compare Isa. lxv. 5.

[f] *I fast twice a week.*] It has been observed by most commentators, that the *Jews* especially the *Pharisees*, used generally to keep private *fasts* on *Mondays* and *Thursdays*, as the *primitive Christians* did on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*; and *our Lord* had formerly reproved their ostentatious manner of doing it: Mat. vi. 16—18. See *Drusius in loc.*

[g] *A* miserable *sinner.*] It is very apparent, that the word *sinner* often signifies *an abandoned profligate*, or, as we commonly express it, *a wicked wretch*; and not merely one, who has in some instances violated the Divine law; which, alas, has been,

who acknowledge, that I have nothing to hope, but from the riches of thine unmerited and forfeited goodness. SECT. CXXIX.

Luke XVIII.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Now, added our Lord, *I say unto you*, and I would have you diligently observe it, that *this* poor, humble, self-abasing *man went down to his house justified rather than the other*; and would have been far more acceptable in the sight of God, than the pharisee, if he had indeed been that moral upright man he pretended: Even in that case his pride and confidence in his own righteousness would have blasted all; *for every one that exalteth himself, shall be abased; but he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted*[h]; as nothing is more hateful to God than pride, and nothing more amiable than lowliness of mind. 14

IMPROVEMENT.

How hateful is the character of this *unjust judge, who neither feared God, nor reverenced man*, but centred all his regards in himself! How hateful, and how contemptible, in any circumstance of life; especially in *a magistrate*, the guardian of the public interest, in comparison of which he ought to forget his own! Yet even he was prevailed upon by *importunity*; and *our Lord* mentions it, to encourage the *fervour* of our *addresses* to the throne of grace. What then, is the blessed God, like this *unjust Judge*, to be *wearied out* with a peal of words, and thereby weakly induced, to do what would otherwise have been contrary to his designs? Far from us be so absurd, and so impious a thought! Our condescending *Lord* only intended to intimate, that if the repeated *importunate cries* of the afflicted may at length prevail, even on an *inhumane heart*, they will be much more regarded by a *righteous* and *merciful God*, who is always ready to bestow his favours, when he sees we are prepared to receive them.—We may be sure, that *God will vindicate his elect:* Let this encourage them, though *the rod of the wicked* may for a while *rest on their back*; and let it intimidate the *proud oppressors* of the earth, who in the midst of all their pomp and power, are so wretched, as to have the prayers of God's people against them. Ver. 2 5 1 6 7

How

been, and is the case with the best of men. See Psal. xxvi. 9. Amos ix. 10. Mat. ix. 10, 11. xxvii. 45. Luke vi. 32, 33. vii. 37, 39. xix. 7. John ix. 24, 31. and 1 Tim. i. 9.

h *Every one that exalteth himself, shall be abased,* &c.] This appears to have been a favourite *maxim* with *our Lord*, since we find it repeated almost in these very words, no less than *three* different times; not to mention a multitude of expressions, in sense nearly equivalent. See Mat. xxiii. 12. and Luke xiv. 11. Compare *note* k, *sect.* clvii.

SECT. CXXIX.

How instructive is this *parable* of the *publican* and *pharisee*? and how well connected with the former, to teach us that *humility*, without which *repeated prayers* will be repeated insults, and affronts to heaven? Let us not *trust in ourselves, that we are righteous, and despise others;* but rather be severe to our own faults, and candid to theirs.

Ver. 9

Behold this arrogant *pharisee, standing apart* from the *publican*, but as near as he could to the seat of the Divine Majesty! And hear him boldly celebrating his own praises, rather than those of his Maker! *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men.* We see a man may acknowledge, it is the *grace of God*, which *makes the difference* between him and others; and yet while he professes that *humbling doctrine* of the gospel, may be blown up with *pride:* Yea, he may nourish, and express that *pride*, by the words in which he declares his *faith*. Mistaken creature! that imagined this *encomium* on himself was *a prayer*, and trusted in this defective *morality*, and these *ceremonies* of human device, while an utter stranger to real vital religion. Happier, a thousand times happier, the poor *publican*, when abasing himself in the dust; when *smiting on his breast;* when owning himself *a sinner*, and imploring the Divine *mercy* as his only hope! *Lord*, we equally need it: May we with equal *humility* seek it! May we habitually maintain those views of ourselves, which may promote that *humility*, so necessary in order to the acceptance of our addresses, and therefore to the happiness of our souls. And indeed, if in our approaches to God, we can place our confidence in any *righteousness of our own*, whatever we may imagine of our own knowledge or holiness, we have need to be *taught again the first principles* of both, and are strangers to the essentials of religion.

11

12

13

SECT. CXXX.

Christ opens the eyes of a man who was born blind; and the sanhedrim examine strictly into the evidence of the miracle. John IX. 1—23.

JOHN IX. 1.

SECT. CXXX.

OUR Lord was now come to Jerusalem, at the feast of dedication, about the middle of December [a]; *and as he was passing along* through

John IX. 1.

JOHN IX. 1.

AND as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which

[a] About the middle of December.] See John x. 22. and the *note* there, *sect.* cxxxiv. Notwithstanding all the pains which Mr. Whiston has taken, to prove that *the cure of the blind man*, of which we have an account here, happened several months before Christ discovered himself to him in the temple, and indeed at the preceding *feast of tabernacles*, I choose, with the generality of *critics*, to introduce it here; not merely that the thread of the story might not be interrupted, but because Mr. Whiston's

which was blind from his birth.

through the streets of that city, *he saw a* poor *man, who had been blind from his birth*, that sate, and asked relief from those that went by. SECT. CXXX. John IX. 2.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

And his disciples, taking notice of the poor man's case, applied themselves to Jesus, and *asked him* concerning it, *saying, Rabbi*, we desire thou wouldst tell us, *who* it was that *sinned* in so extraordinary and aggravated a manner, as to occasion such a judgment? Had *this man* himself been guilty of some heinous crime, as some of our doctors suppose he might be, in a pre-existent state[b]? *or* had *his parents*, before his birth, committed some notorious sin; for we apprehend, *that he was born blind*, as a punishment to himself, or them, or both.

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

But *Jesus*, waving the curiosity of the question, *answered, It is not, because either this man, or his parents, have sinned* in such an extraordinary manner as you suppose; nor was the punishment of either the chief design of this dispensation of Providence; *but* the intent of it was, *that the* miraculous *works of God might be* remarkably *manifested, in* restoring *him* to sight, as you will quickly see. 3

4 I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

For however the malice of the Jews may be irritated by it, *I must perform the works of him that sent me, while it is day*, and the opportunity of dispatching it continues; for I well know, that *the night is coming, in which no man can work:* I see death approaching, which, as it puts a period in general to human labours, so will close the scene of such miracles as these, and remove me from the converse and society of men. 4

5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

But *so long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world;* 5

Whiston's reasons (in his *Harmony*, p. 385) appear inconclusive. For I see not but all here recorded might happen within the compass of *two or three days* at most, nay, perhaps, of *one* single *day*. And it seems much more probable that παραγων [*as he passed*] might be used here without any immediate reference to παρηγεν, in the preceding *verse*, (John viii. *ult.* sect. cv.) than that when Christ was *fleeing out of the temple* in the hasty manner described there, his *disciples* as he *passed away* from his enemies, should put so nice a question to him (as in ver. 2), or that he should stand still to discourse with them, and to perform such a cure in so leisurely a manner, as it is plain this was done.

b In a pre-existent state.] *Dr. Lightfoot (Hor. Heb. in loc.)* shews, that some Rabbies have wildly fancied a child might *sin* in its *mother's womb:* but most *commentators*, with juster reason, agree that this refers to the notion the Jews had of the *transmigration of souls*. They thought that if a man behaved himself amiss he was afterwards sent into another body, where he met with great calamities, and lived on much worse terms than before; whereas a more advantageous situation than the former was supposed the reward of distinguished virtue: a notion which they borrowed from the Pythagoreans; which seems to be hinted at by Josephus, and is plainly referred to, Wisd. viii. 19, 20. (Compare Mat. xiv 2. xvi. 14.)—Perhaps the *disciples* might put this question on purpose to learn *our Lord's* sentiments on this subject of curious speculation; but he wisely declined an express decision of the matter, to fix on something more useful.

c *Wash*

SECT. CXXX.

world; and as a proof of the Divine illumination I am capable of giving, I have often restored sight to the blind; and I will do it in this instance.

John IX. 5.

6 Now *when he had spoken thus*, that he might exercise the faith and obedience of the patient, and might shew that he could command efficacy on whatever means he should please to use, *he spat on the ground, and made clay with the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the*
7 *clay*: *And* then, for a farther trial of his resignation and submission, he *said to him, Go, wash at the pool of Siloam* [c]; *(which* word Siloam *being interpreted* from the Hebrew, *signifies Sent*, and so bore some analogy to the character of Jesus, as sent of God.) *He therefore* presently complied with the direction, and *went away, and washed* as he was ordered, *and* had no sooner done it, but he *came* from the pool *seeing*; and not only found his sight given him, but his eyes were at once so remarkably strengthened, that he immediately could bear the light [d].

6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

7 And said unto him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

8 *The neighbours therefore, and they who had seen him before*, and known *that he was* always *blind, said* one to another, *Is not this he that sat* in the street, *and asked* [*charity*] of those who passed by? Whence is there such an astonishing
9 alteration in him? And *some said, It is* assuredly *he*; *and others, It is* indeed very much *like him*, yet it cannot be the person himself [e]: [*but*] *he said*, and confidently averred, Truly *I*
10 *am the* very *man*. *They therefore said to him, How* then *were thine eyes opened*, which we know to

8 The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

9 Some said, This is he: others *said*, He is like him: *but* he said, I am *he*.

10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

[c] *Wash at the pool of Siloam.*] Perhaps by this command *our Lord* intended to make the miracle so much the more taken notice of; for a crowd of people would naturally gather round him, to observe the event of so strange a prescription. And as it is exceeding probable that *the blind man* had a guide to lead him, especially through the streets of so populous a city, he might naturally mention the errand they were going upon, and call those that saw him to a greater attention. Accordingly this miracle was afterwards talked of with particular regard: John xi. 37, sect. cxl.—As for the *pool of Siloam*, it was supplied from the fountain of that name which arose in the south-west part of Jerusalem. See *note* [c] on Luke xiii. 4, p. 8. and *Reland. Palestin.* p. 857.

[d] Could bear the light.] This is strongly intimated in the phrase, *he came seeing*. Compare *note* [b], sect. lxxxvi. Vol. VI. p. 452.—Perhaps he had been taught by the example of Naaman not to despise the most improbable means when prescribed in the view of a *miracle*. Yet it is plain he did not know this was *Jesus of Nazareth* yet, and so had no particular faith in him (compare ver. 12.); which shews, by the way, that *such a faith* was not universally required as a *condition* of receiving a cure.

[e] *It is like him*, &c.] The circumstance of having *received his sight* would give him an air of spirit and cheerfulness which would render him something *unlike* what he was before, and might occasion a little doubt to those who were not well acquainted with him; as Bishop Hall justly observes.

[f] *It*

SECT. CXXX.

John IX. 11.

to have been blind? Could any medicine have so strange an effect? And *he replied, A* certain *man*, who is *called Jesus*, and who is famous for many other extraordinary works, *made clay* by spitting on the ground, *and, having anointed mine eyes* with it, *said to me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash* there: *and* accordingly *I went and washed, and* immediately *received my sight;* and this is, in a few words, a true and exact account of this wonderful fact.

11 He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus, made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

Then said they to him, Where is he that performed this, and gave thee such directions? And *he said, I do not know;* for I have never yet seen him, nor ever conversed with him, otherwise than as I just now told you.

12 Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

And *they brought him who had formerly been blind to the Pharisees* in the grand sanhedrim, that he might be examined by them; that so, if there was any fraud in the matter, they might discover and expose it. *Now it was* on *the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay*[f], in the manner before related, *and opened his eyes;* which was a circumstance that some of these hypocritical rulers pretended to take great offence at. *The Pharisees therefore*, disposed to find all the fault they could, *asked him again, how*, or by what means, *he received his sight. And he said to them*, exactly as he had before declared to the people, *He* only *put clay upon mine eyes, and I* then, according to his command, went and *washed* at the neighbouring pool of Siloam, *and*, behold, I *do* now *see* perfectly well.

13 They brought to the Pharisees him that afore-time was blind.

14 And it was the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him, how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

Then said some of the Pharisees, This man, though apparently possessed of some extraordinary power, *is not*, to be sure, a messenger *of God*, nor can he perform these works by a Divine agency, *because he observeth not* the sacred rest of *the sabbath*, which the law of God so expressly enjoins. But *others* more wisely *said, How can a man that is a* notorious *sinner* and sabbath-breaker, as you suppose this man to be, *do such* great and beneficial *miracles*[g], which wear all the

16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath-day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner, do such miracles? And

[f] *It was on the sabbath-day*, &c.] *Dr. Lightfoot* (in his *Hor. Heb.* on ver. 6.) has shewn, that *anointing the eyes on the sabbath-day* with any kind of medicine was forbidden to the Jews by the *tradition* of the *elders*.

[g] *Such* great and beneficial *miracles*.] This seems to intimate that they thought there were at least some *miracles so glorious*, and so benevolent, that no *evil agent* would have either inclination or power to perform them; and that they reckoned *this* in that number. The thought seems both rational and important, and is set in a very strong light by the learned Mr. Chapman, in his *Eusebius*, chap. ii.

[h] The

SECT. CXXX.

John IX. 16.

the marks of a divine original that can be imagined? *And there was a* warm debate and *division among them* on this important question; the few friends of Christ among them not failing to urge so great an advantage against the rest [h].

And there was a division among them.

17 But, to prevent the offence that might be taken at their dispute, *they* turned and *said again to the blind man* (that is, to him who had been blind, and still was spoken of by that title), *What sayest thou concerning him, since he hath,* as thou declarest, *opened thine eyes? And he* freely *said,* It is clear to me that *he is a* most illustrious *Prophet;* for surely otherwise he would have been unable to perform so great a miracle.

17 They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a Prophet.

18 *The Jews therefore* of this great council, being generally displeased with his reply, and yet unable to invalidate it if the miracle was allowed, *would not believe concerning him* on his own credit, *that he had* formerly *been blind, and had* now *received his sight;* but represented it as a confederacy between him and Jesus, by an easy fraud, to get the reputation of so extraordinary a cure: and in this view they went on roundly to censure it, *till they had called* in *the parents of the man, who* maintained that he *had* thus *received his sight,* that they might strictly examine them

18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

19 on this question. *And they asked them, saying, Is this* indeed *your son, of whom* it is reported that *you say he was born blind?* Give us an account of the whole matter; and particularly tell us, if you are sure that he was blind from his

19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How then doth he now see?

20 birth, *how then doth he now see? His parents answered them and said, We* assuredly *know that this is our son; and* affirm it to be true *that he was born blind,* and hath continued so from his

20 His parents answered them, and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind:

21 infancy: *But* as for this strange fact, *how he now sees, we know not; or who has opened his eyes, we know not* any more than he has told us, not being present when the cure was wrought: *he is* himself *of* a sufficient *age* to answer such a question; if you please therefore to *ask him, he will* undoubtedly *speak concerning himself,* and is best able to tell you his own story.

21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age, ask him, he shall speak for himself.

22 *These things his parents said* in this cautious manner, not that they had any doubt of the cure as

22 These words spake his parents, because

[h] The few friends of Christ among them, &c.] If Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea, both members of the *sanhedrim,* were now present, they would naturally distinguish themselves on this occasion; and Gamaliel too, on the principles he afterwards avowed (Acts v. 38, 39), must have been on their side.

SECT. CXXX.

John IX. 22.

cause they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

as wrought by Jesus, but *because they were afraid of the Jews: for the Jews*, in this their highest court, *had already agreed, that if any one should* shew such regard to Jesus of Nazareth as to *confess him to be Christ, he should* immediately *be* excommunicated and *cast out of the synagogue*[i]; a censure which was reckoned very infamous, and attended with many civil incapacities and penalties. Not knowing *therefore* but such an interpretation might be put on their owning the truth of this miracle, *his parents* declined giving any particular testimony concerning it; and rather chose to refer them to their son, and *said, He is of age* sufficient to be heard as an evidence, and it will therefore be most proper that you should *ask* the particulars from *him*.

23 Therefore said his parents, He is of age, ask him.

23

IMPROVEMENT.

OH that the zeal of our great Master might quicken us his too negligent servants! Still is he *the light of the world*, by his doctrines, precepts, and example. May our eyes by Divine grace be opened to see, and our hearts be disposed to love and to follow this light! It was a governing maxim with him, and he meant it also for our admonition, *I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh, wherein no man can work.* We are sent into the world on an important errand, to *work out our own salvation*, and that of others: may we improve the *present day*; and so much the rather, as we see the *night* approaching! On some the *shadows of the evening* are already drawing on; and as to others, their *sun may go down at noon.* Let us therefore, waving the *curiosity* of unprofitable speculations, apply ourselves seriously to the business of life, and zealously seize every opportunity of usefulness.

Ver. 5.

4

2, 3

Our *Lord*, as it should seem *unasked*, and by the person on whom it was wrought *unknown*, performed this important and extraordinary cure. And the *manner* in which he did it is worthy of notice: He *anointed his eyes with clay*, and then commanded him *to wash*. Clay laid on the eye-lids might almost blind a man that had sight; but what could it do towards curing blindness? It

6, 7—

reminds

[i] *If any one should confess him to be Christ*, &c.] Hence it appears, that though *our Lord* was cautious of professing himself to be *the Christ* in express terms, yet many understood the intimations he gave; and that most of *his disciples* by this time declared their faith in him under that character. It also farther appears from hence, that *the parents*, and indeed this *sanhedrim*, knew *who it was* that opened this man's eyes, though he himself was hitherto a stranger to him, and was not yet acquainted with the dignity of his person. Compare ver. 25, 36.

SECT. CXXX. reminds us that God is no farther from the accomplishment of any purpose or event when he works *with*, than *without means*;
6, 7— and that all the creatures are only *that* which his almighty operation makes them.

—7 The *blind man* believed, and received the immediate benefit of it. Had he reasoned, like *Naaman* on the impropriety of the *means*, he had justly been left in darkness. Lord, may our proud hearts be subdued to the methods of thy recovering grace! And may we leave it to thee to choose how thou wilt bestow favours, which it is our highest interest on any terms to receive.

15, 17 It must be a satisfaction to every true *Christian* to observe the
18, 19 curiosity and exactness with which these *Pharisees* inquired into the *miracles of Christ*, and how thoroughly they canvassed every circumstance of them. A truth like this need not fear any examination. Every new witness which they heard confirmed the case, and confounded the obstinacy of their unbelief.—But surely
20--23 the weakness of *the parents* was very pitiable, who, in the midst of the evidence and obligation of such a miracle, were more *afraid* of incurring a human sentence than of offending God, by failing to own so great a favour, and to confess the blessed Person by whom it was wrought. *The fear of man bringeth a snare* (Prov. xxix. 25); but they whose eyes *Christ* has opened in a spiritual sense will see a glory and excellence in him which will animate them boldly to bear their testimony to him, in defiance of all the censures which men can pass, or of all the penalties by which they can enforce them.

SECT. CXXXI.

The man who was born blind that had received his sight is a second time examined before the sanhedrim, who, provoked by the freedom of his replies, excommunicate him; but Jesus meets him, and declares himself to be the Son of God. John IX. 24—38.

JOHN IX. 24.

SECT. CXXXI. NOW, as the sanhedrim were not able to discover any fraud in the miracle mentioned
John IX. 24. in the preceding section by examining the parents, *they therefore called a second time for the man who had been blind, and said to him, Give glory to God*, by a free confession of the fraud, if there be any collusion or artifice in this affair[a]; or, if the cure was really wrought in the manner

JOHN IX. 24.

THEN again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

[a] *Give glory to God*, by a free confession of the fraud, &c.] As it is greatly for the honour of the Divine omniscience and providence that persons who are guilty of crimes not fully proved against them should freely *confess* them, and not presume, against

manner thou affirmest, acknowledge the power, sovereignty, and goodness, of the Divine Being in working by so unworthy an instrument; for *we* certainly *know that this* Jesus of Nazareth, the *man* of whom thou speakest, *is a* profligate *sinner*[b], and deserves public punishment rather than esteem. SECT. CXXXI. John IX. 24.

25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner, *or no*, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.

Then answered he and said, If he be a sinner, I know not any thing of it, having no personal acquaintance with him; but *one thing I* certainly *know*, and will stand to the truth of it, *that whereas I was blind*, even from my birth, *I now see* perfectly well, and owe my sight to the very person whom you condemn. 25

26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

But they again said to him, hoping that, in some minute circumstance at least, he might contradict his former account, and give them some advantage against him, Tell us once more, as particularly as thou canst, *what did he unto thee?* and *how did he open thine eyes?* 26

27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear *it* again? will ye also be his disciples?

And as the man perceived that they intended only to insnare him, *he answered them* eagerly, *I have told you already, and ye have not regarded* what I said, nor would at all believe me: *why would you* desire to *hear it again? Would you also become his disciples*, as many have lately done, and some, perhaps, on occasion of this miracle which he has performed on me? 27

28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple? but we are Moses' disciples.

The Pharisees *then* were filled with indignation, and were so greatly exasperated at what appeared to them so insolent a speech, that *they reviled him* in very opprobrious language, *and said, Thou art* indeed *this fellow's disciple*, as many of the herd of ignorant people are; *but* we would have thee to know that we scorn the imputation, for *we are the disciples of Moses*[c], and 28

against the dictates of conscience, to maintain their own innocence; there is a great propriety in the *phrase* taken in this sense: (compare Josh. vii 19, and Rev. xi. 13.) Yet some have taken it as a general *adjuration* by the glorious name of God; as 1 Kings xxii. 16; 2 Chron. xviii. 15; and Mat. xxvi. 63.)—The words also admit another sense, which I have comprehended in the *paraphrase*; but I prefer the former.

[b] *This man is a sinner.*] I cannot, with Mr. Locke (*Reasonableness of Christianity*, p. 28), imagine this any proof of a *tradition* among the Jews that the Messiah should be perfectly *free from sin*; but rather conclude that *sinner* here, as ver. 16, signifies *a notoriously wicked man.* It was certain from the principles of their sacred writings, that a person *not entirely sinless* might perform very illustrious miracles. But how severe an insult was here on the character of *our Redeemer*, to be pronounced *a known scandalous sinner* by this high court of judicature! An infamy which has seldom, in any civilized country, fallen on any person not legally convicted.

[c] *We are the disciples of Moses.*] Hereby they craftily, but most maliciously and falsely, insinuated that there was such an opposition between Moses and Jesus, that it was impossible for the same persons to be the *disciples* of both.

[d] *We*

SECT. CXXXI.

and are too firmly attached to that great and holy prophet to regard such a deceiver as this.

John IX. 29.

We well *know that God spake to Moses*[d], and gave the most ample evidence of sending him with a Divine commission; *but as for this man, we know not from whence he is*, nor can we perceive any satisfactory credentials of his bringing any message from God to us.

29 We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

30 But, not discouraged by their unjust reflections, *the man replied* with a becoming freedom of spirit, *and said unto them, Why, in this respect, it is strange that you know not from whence he is; and yet* it is plain that *he has opened mine eyes.*

30 The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

31 *Now we* all *know* in general *that God heareth not sinners*, and that persons of infamous characters and immoral lives cannot expect the Divine acceptance in any common petition which they offer, much less for the performance of a miracle; *but if any man be* truly *devout*, and faithfully *do his will, him* indeed *he heareth* with a favourable regard: when therefore God is found to hear a man in such an extraordinary instance as this, there seems the greatest reason to believe he is a person whose temper and character are approved by him.

31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

32 And this is plainly an extraordinary instance; for *from the beginning of the world it was never heard that any man opened the eyes of one who*, like me, *was born blind.* It is surprising, therefore, that you, who allow that Moses was a prophet, on the authority of his miracles, should in this case judge so hardly of my deliverer, whoever he be.

32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

33 But every unprejudiced person may easily see that *if this man were not* sent *of God, he could do nothing* of this kind.

33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

34 And, not being able to endure so plain and forcible a reproof, which even stung them to the heart, *they answered and said to him*, with great hatred and scorn, Thou vile presumptuous wretch, *thou wast entirely born in sins*, and didst bring into the world with thee most evident tokens of Divine wrath and vengeance; *and dost thou* insolently take upon thee to *teach us*, the guides

34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

d *We know that God spake to Moses.*] Their partiality here was inexcusable; for if they believed the *mission* of Moses, on the evidence of *miracles*, credibly attested indeed, but performed two thousand years before they were born; it was much more reasonable, on their own principles, to believe the *mission* of Jesus, on at least equal *miracles*, wrought daily among them, when they might in many instances have been eye-witnesses to the facts; and one of which, notwithstanding all their malice, they were here compelled to own, or at least found themselves utterly unable to disprove.

With

guides of the national faith, and members of the supreme court of ecclesiastical judicature? We shall find out a way to correct this arrogance. *And* immediately *they cast him out* of the synagogue, passing a solemn sentence of excommunication upon him, though there was no shadow of proof that he had deserved it.

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

Now *Jesus* quickly *heard* of their arbitrary proceedings, *that they had* thus passed sentence on the poor man, and had *cast him out* for his sake; *and, finding him* soon after, *he said to him* privately, *Dost thou believe on the Son of God*, the great expected Messiah? 35

36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

He answered and said, Sir, who is he that I may believe on him? I know that such a glorious Person is expected; and if he be already come, tell me but who he is, and where I may meet with him, and I am ready to express a due regard to him who shall be pointed out to me under that honourable and important character. 36

37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

Then Jesus, to encourage him under what he was now suffering on his account, *said to him*, with a degree of freedom which was very unusual [e], Thou hast no need of going far to seek him; for *thou hast both* already *seen him*, and had experience of his power and goodness: it was he that miraculously opened thine eyes, *and* indeed it is even *he that is* now *talking with thee* who *is that very Person*. 37

38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

And, immediately yielding to that convincing argument which arose from what he had himself experienced of his almighty power, *he said, Lord, I* most readily *believe* that thou art he, and humbly prostrate myself before thee, to render thee due homage as such. *And*, falling down at his feet, *he worshipped him*. 38

IMPROVEMENT.

So little does *truth* fear repeated examinations; and thus does it, after every trial, *come forth like* pure *gold* out of the furnace. So did this *miracle of Christ* appear to these subtile adversaries; so will Ver. 24--27

e With a degree of freedom very unusual.] We have formerly observed the wise *caution* of Jesus on this head. See sect. xxix. *note* r, Vol VI. p. 166.—The *freedom* here used may be accounted for by considering the extraordinary circumstances of the case; this being the first instance in which any one had incurred the great inconveniences attending a sentence of *excommunication* out of zeal for the honour of Christ. No doubt this passed *privately* between *our Lord* and this good man, though presently after others joined the conversation, as we observe in the beginning of the *next section*.

f More

SECT. CXXXI. will the *Christian cause* appear to all who will diligently search into its evidence.

28, 29 Who can forbear wondering at the obstinacy of these *Pharisees;* and, on the same principles, at that of the present *Jews*, who, while they acknowledge that *God spake by Moses*, because he wrought *miracles*, will not, on the evidence of yet more various and glorious *miracles*[f], and those attested beyond all contradiction, acknowledge the authority of the *Son of God* himself?

30 But we see this poor illiterate creature (for such he undoubtedly was,) with the advantage of *truth* on this side, baffles all the sophistry of his most learned antagonists. *Great is the truth, and it will prevail.* Great is *this truth*, so fundamental to the gospel, that *Jesus is the Son of God:* and *this* also, which is so important to natural religion and revealed, that *God heareth not sinners; but*
31 *if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he hears*, and most favourably regards. May we be truly *devout*, and add to our devotion an obedient regard to the Divine will, and *the eyes of the Lord will be upon us, and his ears be open to our cry!*
34 (Psal. xxxiv. 15.) Then, being favourably owned of *God*, we shall have no reason to fear the censures of *men*. If they *cast us*
35--37 *out Christ* will receive us, and perhaps *reveal himself to us* with more *freedom*, in proportion to the *injuries* we sustain from them.

SECT. CXXXII.

Christ admonishes the Pharisees of their danger; and represents himself as the door of the sheepfold through which men must necessarily enter, if they desire their own salvation, or that of others committed to their care. John IX. 39, *to the end;* X. 1—10.

JOHN IX. 39.

SECT. CXXXII. WHILE Jesus stood talking with the blind man who had received his sight, several people, who were then entering into the temple, knowing them both, and desirous to hear what passed, gathered together about them: *and Jesus said*, so that they all might hear him, You may see in this man, and in what has happened in relation to him, an illustration of the effects which my appearance is to produce: for *I am come into this world for judgment* as well as mercy:

John IX. 39.

JOHN IX. 39.

AND Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world: that they which see not, might see; and that they which see, might be made blind.

[f] More various and glorious miracles.] A beautiful *parallel* between the *miracles* of Moses and Christ is drawn by *Orobio* on the one hand, and *Limborch* on the other, *Limb. Collat. cum Judæo, Script.* iii. *Quæst.* 4. No. 3. p. 131. *& seq.* and *Resp. ad Script.* iii. p. 151. *& seq.*

If

SECT. CXXXII.

mercy; *that*, on the one hand, *they who see not, might see*, or that the ignorant souls, who are willing to be instructed, might learn Divine knowledge; *and*, on the other hand, *that they who see, may be made blind*; that such as are proudly conceited of their own science and wisdom may either be humbled or exposed; and they who wilfully stand out, and harden their hearts against my instructions, may bring upon themselves yet greater darkness. John IX. 39.

40 And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him, heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

40 *And* [*some*] *of the Pharisees who were* then present *with him, heard these things, and* apprehending that he glanced at them, *said to him, Are we also blind?* and dost thou mean to insinuate any thing of that kind? If thou dost, speak plainly. Now this they said, hoping thereby to draw him into some dangerous reflection on the sanhedrim, who had lately passed their censure on the man whose eyes he had opened.

41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

41 *Jesus said to them, If you were* indeed *blind*, and laboured under unavoidable ignorance, *you would not* then *have* any *sin* in comparison of what you now have[a], *but now you say, Surely, we see* much more clearly than the rest of mankind, *therefore your sin abides* upon you with greater aggravation; and this conceit which you have of your own knowledge hinders conviction, and prevents the first entrance of instruction into your minds.

JOHN X. 1. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

John X. 1. Nevertheless, whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, I will for a while longer continue my admonitions; and therefore, *verily, verily, I say unto you* who call yourselves the shepherds of the people, That *he who enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other* private *way*, whatever be the character he may assume, *the same is* to be looked upon as no better than *a thief and a robber. But he that comes in at the door* of the sheepfold *is the* true *shepherd of the sheep*; and such a one will always choose to enter in by that which is the regular appointed 2

[a] *If you were* indeed *blind, you would not have* any *sin, &c.*] *Elsner (Observ.* Vol. I. p. 326.) understands this of *corporeal blindness*; as if *our Lord* had said, "It is a great aggravation of your perverseness, that you know by experience the difference between *blindness* and *sight*, which might convince you of the importance of such a miracle, and of the Divine power by which it is wrought."—But the following words, *But now you say, We see*, suit much better with the sense given in the *paraphrase*.

[b] *The*

SECT. CXXXII.

John X. 3.

appointed way. *To him*, as soon as he approaches, *the door-keeper opens* the fold [b]; *and the sheep* themselves *hear his voice* with regard; *and he* is well acquainted with each of them, insomuch that he *calls* each of *his own sheep by name* [c], *and leads them out* to pasture. *And when he* thus *puts forth his own sheep* from the fold, *he* himself *goes before them*, to guide them to good pastures, and to defend them from any danger which may occur; *and the sheep* cheerfully *follow him; for they* well *know his voice*, being daily accustomed to it. *But* if *a stranger* come to lead them out, *they will not follow* him; *but*, on the contrary, they *will flee* away *from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.*

3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice.

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

6 *This* short *parable Jesus spake unto them; but they did not understand what it was that he said to them*, but were quite at a loss to conjecture his meaning; though his intent in describing the character of the good Shepherd was plainly to shew how far the Pharisees, who assume the name, were from answering it; and to warn the true sheep, or persons of real integrity and simplicity, of the danger of being blindly governed and guided by them.

6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 *Then Jesus*, to clear up what was most obscure in his former discourse, *said to them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you*, and solemnly assure you, *that*, however you neglect me, *I am the door of the sheep* [d], and it is only by authority derived

7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

[b] *The door-keeper opens* the fold.] Grotius does not attempt the accommodation of this circumstance: Mr. Cradock interprets it of the *Holy Ghost*; and Dr. Whitby of *God the Father*, as giving free admission to those *teachers* who maintained a due regard to Christ: an interpretation which seems much more reasonable than to refer it (as some do) to *ministers*.—It is suggested by Sir Isaac Newton, that, as these words were spoken *near the temple*, where *sheep* were kept *in folds* to be sold for sacrifices, Christ here alludes to what was *peculiar in those folds*; that, as they were *kept locked*, they not only excluded *the thief*, but *the shepherd*, till the *door-keeper* opened them. (See *Newton on Proph.* p. 148.) But I cannot think, whatever occasion Christ might take from the sight of *sheep* to represent *his people* under that image, and *himself* as a Shepherd, he would describe them like *sheep shut up in a pen* to be sold for sacrifice: nor does the shepherd's *leading them out*, &c. agree with this circumstance. In countries where there were so many savage beasts it might be ordinarily necessary to have *the folds better secured* than among us; and *the chief shepherd* might often leave a servant to watch them while thus shut up, and come himself to lead them out to pasture in a morning

[c] *Calls his own sheep by name.*] Dr. Hammond justly infers from hence, that the *eastern shepherds*, at least those of Judea, gave particular *names* to their *sheep*, as most men do to their *dogs* and *horses*.—Their custom also was to *lead the sheep*, playing on some *musical instrument*.

[d] *I am the door*, &c.] It would be very impertinent to run a long parallel here between Christ and *a door*. The resemblance plainly centres in this one circumstance; that as a man must observe and pass through *the door*, in order to his making a regular and unsuspected entrance into a *sheepfold*; so he must maintain a proper regard

derived from me that the people of God are to be taught and fed. *All that ever came before me*, assuming the Messiah's character, or setting up for a despotic authority in the church, and teaching other methods of salvation than by me [c], *are thieves and robbers*, persons of very bad designs, who had no warrant from above for what they did; and, whatsoever their pretences were, their administration has a fatal tendency to make havock of the souls they should watch and feed; *but the* true *sheep*, or those who are sincere and well-disposed persons, *have not heard them*, so as to relish and regard their doctrine. I therefore repeat it again, as a most important truth, That *I* myself *am the door*; and *if any one enter in by me*, and acknowledge my authority, *he shall be*, like a sheep in his fold, *safe* from the invasion of what might injure and destroy him; *and shall go in and out* under my care and guidance, *and* shall still *find* good *pasture*; that is, in consequence of his regard to me, and the enjoyment of communion with me, his soul shall be fed and nourished with true doctrine, and shall obtain substantial happiness. For whereas *the thief only comes that he may steal, and kill, and destroy*; *I am come* for the benefit of all my sheep, *that they may have* true *life, and that* at length *they may have it* yet *more abundantly* [f]; a most plentiful provision being made for their everlasting comfort and happiness, even far beyond what has ever been known before.

SECT. CXXXII.

John X. 8.

6 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them.

9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

9

10 The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

10

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us hear, with an holy awe on our spirits, that the *Lord Jesus Christ came into the world for* purposes of *judgment* as well as

John IX. 39.

regard to Christ, in order to his being a true *teacher* in the church, and must pass (as it were) *through him*, or by his authority, into his office. It is by a *simile* very near resembling this that Christ elsewhere calls himself *the way*. John xiv. 6 sect. clxxiii.

c *All that ever came before me*, &c.] If it could be shewn, by any proper authority, that πρὸ ἐμοῦ ever signifies *in neglect of me*, or πρὸ θύρας *passing by a door*, I should with *Elsner* (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 327.) prefer that rendering to any other; but as this does not appear, it is evident that the words must be understood with the *limitation* added in the *paraphrase*: for otherwise they would imply such a reflection on Moses and the *prophets* as we know *our Lord* could never intend.—Perhaps he might refer to such persons as Judas of Galilee, or Theudas, who had been the occasion of destruction to their followers. See Acts v. 36, 37.

f *That they may have it more abundantly.*] To refer this *latter clause*, at least *ultimately* to the provision which Christ has made for the future and *eternal happiness* of all his people, seems best to suit the other parts of this discourse, as well as the genius of the whole Christian dispensation. Perhaps the word περισσὸν may intimate how much this provision *exceeded* that made by Moses.

a *I am*

SECT. CXXXII.

as of *mercy*; and make it our humble prayer that we may be *enlightened* by him, and not sealed up under aggravated *darkness*, as a punishment for our obstinacy and impenitence; for then all the means of knowledge which we have so basely perverted will rise up to condemn us.

John X. 7. Let *Christ* be regarded by us as *the door* from whom all true teachers derive their authority, and to whom they direct their administrations: and let it be our care that we *enter by this door*. Let inferior *shepherds* learn their duty, so plainly suggested here: Let them learn to *know their sheep*, and take as particular notice as they can of each single person committed to their care; and let them *go before them* in all the paths of duty: for what could the greatest enemy to the flock do worse than to lead them by example into the paths of destruction?

9 Happy souls, who are *entered in* by this gate! Their safety, their comfort, is secure; they enjoy a holy liberty and plenty, and *going in and coming out they find pasture*. If we are strangers to that entertainment and refreshment which arises from ordinances (those *green pastures* which *Christ* hath provided for *his sheep* in the wilderness,) we have a great deal of reason to fear
10 that we belong nót to his flock. *He came that his sheep might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*; that greater provision might be made for their instruction and consolation now, till they are brought to those *better pastures* he intends for them above: May his grace prepare us for them! and his hand will certainly conduct us to them; nor need we fear the darkest passage in our way.

SECT. CXXXIII.

Christ describes himself as the good shepherd, who will lay down his life for the sheep. John X. 11—21.

JOHN X. 11.

SECT. CXXXIII. John X. 11. OUR Lord, having thus represented himself as the door of the sheep, and intimated the regards to be maintained towards him, particularly by those that professed themselves teachers of others, now changed the similitude, and said, I may also very properly add, that *I am* myself, by way of eminence, *the good Shepherd*[a], the Person frequently forefold in scripture

JOHN X. 11. I Am the good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

[a] *I am the good Shepherd.*] *Lamy* (in his *Harmony*, p. 339) very justly supposes that there might be some *allusion* here to Isa. xl. 11. But nothing can be more precarious than the argument he seems to draw from hence for placing this discourse at the *feast of tabernacles*, even though it should be allowed that the xlth of Isaiah was read in the synagogue at that time of the year: for it is certain *our Lord* does not confine himself to the *lesson for the day* in his *quotations* from scripture, or his *allusions* to it.

scripture under that character, (Isa. xl. 11. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 24. and Mic. v. 4.) and I must fully answer it all in its branches; especially in this, that as *the good shepherd* on occasion *layeth down his* very *life for the* defence of his *sheep*, and will expose himself to any danger for their safety, (compare 1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35,) I not only expose, but sacrifice, my life for the good of my people. SECT. CXXXIII. John X. 11.

12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

The hireling indeed, who is not the true *shepherd*, and *whose own* property *the sheep are not* as soon as he is apprehensive of approaching danger, and *sees the wolf*, for instance, or some other savage beast, *coming*, immediately regarding nothing but his own safety, is only careful to secure himself, *and leaves the sheep and flees away; and* so *the wolf*, meeting with no resistance, *seizes* on some of *them, and disperses the* rest of the *sheep*. *Now the hireling flees* on such an occasion, *because he is a hireling, and is not concerned about* the safety of *the sheep*, but takes the work upon him merely for his own gain and the wages he is to receive: and thus basely will those teachers act in a time of danger who undertake the office merely in regard to their own secular advantage. 12 13

13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 I am the good Shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.

But *I am the good Shepherd*, who have a true affection for my sheep, and am above the influence of all such mean and selfish views: *and* such is the relation that there is between us, and such the love we have to one another, that *I know* and acknowledge *my* [*sheep*], and take the kindest and most tender care of them; *and* I *am* also *known*, acknowledged and confided in, *by mine:* So that we mutually are dear unto each other; and *even as the Father knoweth me*, and owns his affection and regard to me, by the sure tokens of his presence and approbation; *and I* also *know*, or acknowledge and honour, *the Father*, in the delight with which I do his will; so the affection is reciprocal between me and my sheep: *and* as it is in love to them, as well as with an ultimate view to his appointment and his glory, that *I lay down my life for the sheep* he has given me, so also do my sheep acknowledge and confide in me, and so do I protect and patronize them. 14 15

15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of

And I would farther observe to you, as a point of great importance, that *I have other sheep which* 16

SECT. CXXXIII.

John X. 16.

are not of this fold[b] (meaning thereby the elect of God among the Gentiles); *them also must I* at length *bring* in; *and* I know that *they will hear* and obey *my voice*, notwithstanding that ignorance, vice, and misery, in which they are now involved; *and* so, all being incorporated into one society, of which I am the Head, the Governor and Guardian, *there shall be one sheep-fold*, [*and*] *one Shepherd.*

of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one Shepherd.

17 And *for this reason* more especially *does the Father love me*, and approves it as an act of eminent duty and love to him, *because I* am come with this design into the world, to *lay down my life* for the redemption of my sheep, who are dear to him as well as to me, *that I may take it again*, and possess it for ever, to be employed for his glory and for the happiness of my people.

17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

18 For though I am shortly to die by the hands of the most cruel enemies, yet *no one* deprives me of my life, or *takes it from me* against my will; for I have every moment a power to rescue myself at pleasure, and could even with mine expiring breath command immediate deliverance; *but* I will manifestly shew that *I lay it down of myself*, and voluntarily relinquish my body, sooner than my soul would in a course of nature have been dislodged from it[c]: and this in me will be a very regular, though wonderful act; for, as I have life in myself (John v. 26.) *I have* full *power* and authority thus *to lay it down* when I shall think fit[d]; *and I have* also *power to resume it* at pleasure, by entering into and quickening my body again. And indeed *this commandment I have received of my Father*, and shall ere long fulfil the charge in both its branches.

18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

19 When our Lord uttered these remarkable expressions,

19 There was a division

b *I have other sheep, which are not of this fold.*] There seems no reason, with Wolfius, to understand this of Jews living out of the land of Canaan, who could not with such propriety be said not to belong to the *fold* of *Israel*. The incorporating the Gentiles into *one church* with the Jews was indeed a grand event, worthy such particular notice: and it deserves our remark, that they are here called *the sheep of Christ*, even while they were yet in ignorance and idolatry, as he intended at length to bring them home.

c Voluntarily relinquish my body, &c.] That *our Lord* did so evidently appeared from the *strong cry* he sent forth just before his death, with which the *centurion* was reasonably so much impressed. See Luke xxiii. 46, 47. and Mark xv. 39. sect. cxci.

d Full *power* and authority *to lay it down*, &c.] This the word ἐξουσιαν expresses, and the manner of *Christ's death* abundantly proved it: and as no reasonable objection can be made to the equity and wisdom of the Divine Being in giving Christ such a *power*, so the use he made of it (as we may farther shew elsewhere) is truly admirable. See *note* 1 on Luke xxiii. 46. sect. cxci.

vision therefore again among the Jews for these sayings.

20 And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

21 Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil: can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

pressions, *there was a division therefore again among the Jews* (as there had been before, chap. vii. 43. sect. ci. and ix. 16. sect. cxxx.) especially *on account of these* last *words*. *And many of them said, He has* certainly *a demon* dwelling in him, *and*, by the operation of that evil spirit, *is* apparently *distracted* with one of the most malignant kinds of lunacy; *why* then *do you* give yourselves the trouble to *hear him* while he goes on in such extravagant absurdities? But *others* much more rationally *said, These are not* by any means *the words of a demoniac*, or a lunatic; for there is the greatest consistence and energy in them: and besides, *could a demon* that made a man mad *open the eyes of the blind*, as it is plain this man has often and very lately done? It is rather madness to imagine that an evil spirit has such power, or that he would employ it to such benevolent purposes.

SECT. CXXXIII.

John X. 20.

21

IMPROVEMENT.

THERE is not, perhaps, any where to be found a greater instance of the force of *prejudice* than in these perverse *Jews*, who censured *Christ* as *a lunatic* and *a demoniac* for one of the gravest and most excellent speeches that was ever delivered. Let us review it with all due attention and regard. Ver. 20

Let us consider *Christ* as the *good Shepherd*, and humbly commit our souls to him, as ever we desire they should be safe and happy. We have known his kind regards to the flock in exposing and *laying down his life for them*. And he hath not *laid it down* in vain. Delightful thought! Our compassionate *Shepherd*, even when *the sword of the Lord* was *awakened* to *smite him*, has not so fallen as to rise no more; but as in this great and good work he voluntarily *laid down*, so he has also *re-assumed his life*; and still bears on his heart the same concern for his flock, and uses his renewed life and exalted dignity for their security and happiness. 11 15 18

Let us humbly *acknowledge him* as *acknowledged by the Father*: let us courageously and gratefully own him, and be ready to *lay down our lives* also *for him*. We are those *other sheep*, of whom he spake, *who were not* originally *of the fold*, but by his grace are now *brought in* to the great *Shepherd and Bishop of souls*. Let us pray that the boundaries of *his fold* may be still more extended, and the whole number of his elect accomplished; that all the flock may at length appear together, and may be conducted by him to the regions of that immortal life which he determines to give it. 15 16

In

SECT. CXXXIII.

In the mean time let us maintain all proper regards to him, and especially the most cheerful confidence in his care; repeating with evangelical views, and so with a peculiar sublimity of sense, those words of *David* as our own, (Psal. xxiii. 1—4.) "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want: he maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters: he restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake: yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

Ver. 14

SECT. CXXXIV.

Christ, discoursing of his union with the Father, is charged with blasphemy; and, being assaulted by the Jews, retires beyond Jordan. John X. 22, *to the end.*

JOHN X. 22.

SECT. CXXXIV.

NOW it may be proper to observe, that the time when these discourses were delivered by our Lord *was the feast of dedication*[a], which was observed *at Jerusalem* in memorial of the purification of the temple after it had been polluted by the idolatries and impieties of Antiochus; *and* consequently *it was winter*. *And*, to shelter himself from the inclemencies of the weather, *Jesus was* then *walking in* the covered walk that went round *the temple*, and was now *in* that part of it which was called *Solomon's porch*[b].

John X. 22.

23

24 *Then* several of *the Jews surrounded him, and said unto him, How long dost thou hold us in* an anxious

JOHN X. 22.

AND it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter.

23 And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.

24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How

[a] *The feast of dedication.*] As it is expressly said this feast was in *winter*, it is plain it could not be observed in remembrance of the *dedication* of *Solomon's temple*, which was just after *harvest* (1 Kings viii. 2.) nor of that of Nehemiah's, which was in the *spring* (Ezra vi. 15, 16.) but the feast here intended must be that instituted by Judas Maccabæus on his having purified the temple and altar from the pollutions and idolatries of Antiochus Epiphanes. This was celebrated every year for eight days successively, in the month of December (1 Mac. iv. 52, 59.) and is mentioned by *Josephus* as a festival to which great regard was paid in his time. See *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xii. cap. 7 (al. 11), § 6, 7, and *Selden. de Sened.* lib. iii. cap. 13, § 7.

[b] *Solomon's porch.*] *Josephus* informs us (*Antiq.* lib. viii. cap. 3 (al. 2), § 2, 9, and lib. xx. cap. 9 (al. 8), § 7) that Solomon, when he built the temple (finding the *area* of *Mount Sion* too small to answer his magnificent plan), filled up a part of the adjacent valley, and built an outward *portico* over it towards the east. This was a most noble structure, supported by a wall 400 cubits high, and consisting of stones of a vast bulk, each stone (as it is said) being twenty cubits long and six cubits high. And Josephus speaks of it as continuing even to the time of Albinus and Agrippa, which was several years after the death of Christ. This is called *Solomon's porch*, Acts iii. 11. and v. 12.

How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

anxious and uneasy *suspense? If thou art* indeed *the Messiah, tell us so plainly* and expressly: which they said with a malicious design to insnare and accuse him.

SECT. CXXXIV.

John X. 24.

25 Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.

And *Jesus answered them, I have* in effect *told you* over and over[c], *yet you believe* me *not;* and, had I offered nothing more, *the works which I do in my Father's name* sufficiently declare it, as it is clearly to be seen that *they bear witness of me* in a language which you would easily understand if you were to judge impartially. 25

26 But ye believe not; because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

But you do not believe, because you are not persons of such simplicity and sincerity as I described under the character *of my sheep.* For, *as I said unto you* but just now (ver. 4, 14, 16), *My* 26

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

sheep hear my voice, and I know and take care of *them; and they*, like sheep accustomed to their shepherd, acknowledge and *follow me.* *And* 27

28 And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.

the consequence of that will be such as would make it well worth your while to lay aside all these prejudices, and to join with them: for *I give unto them* an invaluable blessing, even *eternal life; and* guard them with such almighty power and constant care, that *they shall never perish, neither shall any* enemy, be he ever so subtile, or ever so outrageous, be able to *pluck them out of my hand*[d], or injure them while they remain in it. 28

29 My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all: and none is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand.

Nor indeed is it possible that any should; for *my Father, who gave* [*them*] *to me* on purpose that I might redeem and save them, *is* confessedly *greater than all; and* therefore they must needs be safe, as *none is able to pluck* [*them*] *out of my Father's hand.* 29

30 I and my Father are one.

Now it is a most certain truth that *I and the Father are one*[e]: and the union between us is so strict and intimate, 30

[c] *I have* in effect *told you* over and over.] What he had just been saying of himself, in the preceding *verses*, as the great *Shepherd*, was in sense equivalent to a declaration of his being the Messiah.—I mention that discourse as what had just been delivered, because I think it most natural to explain the 22d *verse* as referring to what was said before, and not merely to what follows: for else the *evangelist* would probably have said, *After these things was the feast of dedication.* Compare John v. 1. vi. 4. and vii. 1, 2.

[d] *Neither shall any* enemy *pluck them*, &c.] This is the plain import and energy of the *original* (και αρπαση τις αυτα), which is greatly enervated by adding the word *man* in the *translation*, as the authors of our *English version* have frequently done. (Compare Mat. xi. 27. Mark xiii. 5. and Jam. i. 13.) The *sheep* of Christ are exposed to so great danger from the infernal *lion* (1 Pet. v. 8.) that I doubt not but *this text* most eminently refers to the care of their *Shepherd* to guard them from his assaults.

[e] *I and the Father are one.*] If we attend, not only to the obvious meaning of these words in comparison with other passages of Scripture, but to the connection of this celebrated text, it so plainly demonstrates the *Deity* of our blessed Redeemer, that I think it may be left to speak for itself, without any laboured comment.—How widely different that sense is in which Christians are said to be *one with God* (John xvii.

SECT. CXXXIV.

John X. 30.

intimate, in nature as well as in affection and design, that his almighty power is mine, to be employed for the defence of my sheep; and no one can deprive them of eternal life without prevailing against him as well as me.

31 *Then the Jews*, transported with rage, *took up* some of the *stones* which lay in the court of the temple, where they were still repairing some of the buildings, and armed themselves with them *again*, as they had formerly done, (John viii. 59. Vol. VI. p. 545), in order *to stone him.*

31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

32 But *Jesus*, with his usual mildness and strength of reason, *answered them, I have shewed you many good works from my Father;* and *for which of these works do you* go about to *stone me?* or what have I ever done among you but acts of beneficence and kindness?

32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father: for which of those works do ye stone me?

33 *The Jews replying, said unto him*, Whatever thy other works have been, it is very apparent, from what has just now passed, that *we do not stone thee for a good work, but for* the most detestable *blasphemy; even because thou, being* only *a* wretched, mortal, sinful *man, makest thyself God;* pretending to be one with him in so extraordinary a manner, that his omnipotence and other divine perfections are thine.

33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

34 *Jesus*, not judging it proper at that time to bring the sublime doctrine of his Deity into farther debate, *answered them, Is it not written in your law*, or in those sacred books which you own to be of Divine original, (Psal. lxxxii. 6.) where it is plain the persons that are spoken of are princes and magistrates, "*I* have *said, Ye are gods;* and all of you are children of the 35 Most High?" Now *if* the Psalmist thus applied this character, and it appears *he called them gods, to whom the word of God* then *came*[t], merely with regard to that office which by Divine designation they bore (*and* certainly *the scripture cannot be broken*, nor can you, with any shew of reason, pretend to censure the propriety of those expressions which a divinely in- 36 spired writer has used); How is it then that you are so offended now? or how *do you* pretend to *say*

34 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods!

35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken:

36 Say ye of him, whom

xvii. 21), will sufficiently appear by considering how flagrantly absurd and blasphemous it would be to draw that inference from *their union with God* which Christ does from his.

[t] *To whom the word of God came.*] I apprehend the *coming of the word of God to them* which is here mentioned refers to the *message* then delivered to them in the name of God, rather than, in the general, to their receiving a *commission* from him: but the difference is not very material.

s When

whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

say concerning him whom the Father hath so solemnly *sanctified*, or set apart to this great work in his eternal counsels, *and* whom he at length has *sent into the world* under such an exalted character, *Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?* when you allow there is a sense in which even oppressive magistrates may be honoured with such a title g.

37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

And when I claim this character, and speak so highly of myself, I do not expect to be credited, merely on my own affirmation: *If I do not the works of my Father*, such glorious works as could not be performed by any but a Divine agent, *believe me not.* 37

38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe, that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.

But if it be apparent that *I do* such works, *though you believe not me*, and are regardless of my own testimony in the case, yet at least *believe the* mighty *works* that I perform; and let the evidence of these remove the prejudices you have entertained, *that ye may know and believe, that the Father* [*is*] *in me, and I in him*, by such a union, as abundantly justifies the expression, which seems to give you such peculiar offence. 38

39 Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand,

Then, though they knew not what to answer him, the Jews were so enraged against him, that *they sought again to seize him*, that they might accuse him of blasphemy before the Sanhedrim: *But he* withdrew himself, as he had done before, in an extraordinary manner, and so *escaped out of their hands.* (Compare Luke iv. 30. sect. 32. and John viii. 59. sect. 105.) 39

40 And went again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

And presently departing from Jerusalem, he *went* away *again* into the country *beyond Jordan, to the place*, called Bethabara, *where* (as it has been observed before, John i. 28. Vol. VI. p. 120.) *John was at first baptizing; and there he abode* 40

g When you allow—magistrates, &c.] A late learned and pious *paraphrast* apprehends that *our Lord* here vindicates his claim to *supreme divinity* by pleading that the *Jewish rulers* are *called gods*, not in a general regard to their *office* as rulers, but as *types* of the Messiah, the great Sovereign of the church, who (as it is expressed at the close of this lxxxiid *psalm*) was to *inherit all nations.* But not to urge that it seems improbable that such *wicked magistrates* as are there spoken of should be described as *types of Christ*, this explication seems to imply, that every person whose office was *typical* of the *Messiah* might be called *a God*; and on the other hand, that a creature's being called by *that name*, would intimate, that he was a *typical* person; the consequences of which I am sure that worthy writer would abhor. (Compare 2 Cor. iv. 4.) I think myself therefore obliged to acquiesce in that plain and natural sense of the passage, which the generality of *commentators*, both antient and modern, have given.—*Jesus* was charged here by the *Jews* with ascribing *divinity* to his *human nature*; and in reply to this he shews, that calling himself *the Son of God* did not imply that; and that *his works* proved such a union of the *human nature* with the *divine*, as he had before asserted; than which no answer could have been more wise and pertinent.

SECT. CXXXIV.

abode for a while, till the fury of the multitude was a little abated. *And many* of the inhabitants of that place who had been formerly acquainted with the Baptist, and remembered the strong and repeated testimonies which he had borne to Jesus, *came to him* there, to attend upon his preaching, *and said* among themselves, *John indeed did no miracle* himself; *but* he foretold extraordinary things of another; and we now find, that *all* the *things which John said of this man were* exactly *true*, which is a Divine attestation to the mission and authority of both.

John X. 41.

41 And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man, were true.

42 *And many* of them *believed on him there*, and happily improved this little season of his recess among them, as the means of their instruction and establishment in piety.

42 And many believed on him there.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 22 It is worthy of remark, that we here see *our Lord Jesus* at a *festival*, appointed only by human authority, in commemoration of a national deliverance. He came from *Galilee* to observe it in the temple, though *it was winter;* and brought with him, as at all times, a heart glowing with the most ardent and amiable zeal, for the honour of God, and the salvation of men, even of those who were studying to insnare and destroy him.

24, 25 What prudence, mingled with spirit and sweetness, runs through *his answers* to them! What inestimable *blessings* does he propose, to invite them to enter into *his fold!* May we never forget those gracious words! May we ever be entitled to all the comfort of 28 them! *I give unto my sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.* Lord, may we be found in the number of those secure and happy souls, even 27 of those who *know thee*, and who *obey thy voice, and follow thee*, whithersoever thou leadest them by thine example, thy Providence, and thy Spirit! Then may we look on our *eternal life* and happiness, as inviolably *secure.* Safely indeed may we trust it in 30 *his hands*, who could say, in so sublime, and so glorious a sense, *I and the Father are one.* The enemies of our salvation must tri-

28, 29 umph then over Omnipotence itself, before they can *wrest the sheep of Christ out of his hands;* nor will his fidelity to God, or his love to them, suffer them to be seduced by *fraud*, any more than destroyed by *violence.*

Blessed situation of thy *little flock!* O thou faithful, thou compassionate, thou *Almighty Shepherd*, gather thou our souls with theirs; and never suffer us to forget of how great importance it is, that we still continue near thee, that we look up to thee for our defence

defence and safety, and confide not in our own power and wisdom, but in thine! SECT. CXXXIV.

Who could have imagined, that any heart could have been so base as to have intended evil, or any hands so cruel, as to have armed themselves with instruments of death, against *such a person*, while speaking such words as these? Yet behold, these *Jews* do it; and that even in so sacred a place, as *the temple* itself; as the genuine *offspring of those, who slew the prophet and priest of the Lord*, even *at his altar*. (Compare Mat. xxiii. 31, 35. and Luke xi. 48, 51.) but his wise and gentle *reply* disarmed them for a few months; and the Divine care and power in an extraordinary manner provided for his *escape*, and once more *rescued him* from their murderous hands. John X. 31. 32 39

Happy the inhabitants of the *country about Jordan*, to which he retired! especially happy, in that they *knew the day of their visitation!* The testimony of *John the Baptist* is now recollected to excellent purposes, though he himself was mouldering in his tomb: Nor is there any thing, which a faithful *Minister* will more earnestly desire, than that even *while dead, he may yet speak*, for the honour of *Christ*, and the salvation of souls. 40 41, 42

SECT. CXXXV.

Christ declares against divorces, except in the case of adultery, and adds some other particulars relating to the married state. Mat. XIX. 1—12. Mark X. 1—12.

MAT. XIX. 1.

AND it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he [arose from thence, *and*] departed from Galilee, and came into

MAT. XIX. 1.

AND after the instructions that were given by our Lord to his disciples at Capernaum, (which were recorded above, from sect. xciii. to xcvi.) *it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these discourses*[a], *he arose from thence*, [*and*] *departed from Galilee*, where he had dwelt so long, and through which he had made such repeated SECT. CXXXV. Mat. XIX. 1.

[a] *When Jesus had finished these discourses.*] The passages which *Matthew* and *Mark* have mentioned, immediately before they introduce this story, are those discourses on humility and the forgiveness of injuries, which have been considered above, from sect. xciii. to xcvi. And I have sometimes been inclined to think, that this, and the next following sections, might have been introduced *there*, as previous to that *feast of tabernacles*, which we have so often mentioned. But most *harmonizers* without any scruple or apology place them *here*, being determined, I suppose, by the close connection between the passages that are here related, and those events that follow them, which happened but a very little while before Christ's death.—It is of very little importance to us, whether these discourses were delivered now or a few months before. However, he might truly be said to *arise from Galilee, and come into these parts*, though he took a considerable compass, and spent several weeks in the journey. Compare *note* o, on Luke ii. 39, Vol. VI. p. 75.

SECT. CXXXV.

Mat. XIX. 1. repeated journeys. *And* after he had first been up at Jerusalem, (as was before related, John vii. 10. Vol. VI. p. 511.) and several other things had happened, which have already been considered in their proper place, *he came* at length (as was observed in the last section, John x. 40.) *into the borders of Judea, beyond Jordan*[b], where he spent some of the winter months, crossing the river, as he saw occasion. *And* his arrival was no sooner known, but *great multitudes followed him* from all the neighbouring parts; *and* particularly *the people*, who had seen him formerly at Bethabara *resorted to him again;* (as was said John x. 41.) *and according to his* usual *custom, he* readily embraced the opportunity of preaching to them, and *taught them* there *again*, as he had done elsewhere; *and* as they brought many sick persons to him, he *healed them* all *there;* which could not but increase the throng.

into the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan. [MARK X. 1.—]

2 And great multitudes followed him, [and the people resort unto him again; and as he was wont, he taught them again,] and he healed them there. [MARK X.—1.]

3 *And the Pharisees*, who always had a watchful eye on his motions, and attended him with the most malignant designs, being now more especially irritated by the fame of his late miracles, which they had in vain endeavoured to suppress, (see John vii. 32, 47. and ix. 16, 24.) *came* hither also *to him*, with the view of getting some advantage over him, by *tempting* him with what they thought a very artful and insnaring question: *And* that they might, if possible, entangle him in his talk, so as to find some reason to accuse him, or to discredit him at least among the people, they *asked him, saying unto him*, What thinkest thou, Master, *Is it lawful for a man to dismiss his wife for every* slight *cause* of dislike, which may be found in her[c]? or is adultery the only just reason for a divorce?

3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and [asked him,] saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?—[MARK X. 2.]

b *Beyond Jordan.*] Mark has expressed this with some little variation, διὰ τοῦ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, *by the farther side of Jordan;* or, as the learned Beza, and some other *critics* choose to render it, *on the banks of Jordan;* and this may seem to be more suitable to what is said of *Christ's coming to the coast of Judea;* which was bounded by Jordan, and had no coasts *beyond* it. But it appears from John x. 40, that *Bethabara, where John at first baptized,* (John i. 28.) was the place to which *our Lord* removed, which was undoubtedly *beyond Jordan*, and over against *Jericho.* (Compare Josh. iii. 16. and Jud. vii. 24.) And this was so near to *the coasts of Judea*, that we might very well retain the usual *version*, and take the phrase as Matthew hath expressed it; especially as it is probable, that Jesus during his abode in these parts might often cross the river, and pass from *Bethabara* to *Judea*, which lay on the opposite side.

c *To dismiss his wife for every cause.*] It is well known that there was a debate between the ancient *rabbies*, (perhaps as old as *our Lord's* time,) concerning the interpretation of the *law* relating to *divorce*, Deut. xxiv. 1. The *school of Sammai* maintained, that the words ערות דבר which

SECT. CXXXV.

Mat. XIX. 4.

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that [God], he which made *them* [from the beginning of the creation,] made them male and female? [MARK X. 6.]

And he said to them in reply, Have ye not read, (Gen. i. 27.) *that God, the* Almighty and All-wise *Creator, from the* very *beginning of the creation,* when he would not fail to constitute human nature in such a way as might be most conducive to its happiness, in forming the first parents of mankind *made them male and female,* or one man and one woman? which would neither allow of divorce or polygamy.

5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave [his] father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. [MARK X. 7, 8.—]

And do you not remember, that when the woman was at first brought to him, the man *said,* as taught by an extraordinary revelation concerning the ends and obligations of marriage, which therefore may in effect be looked upon as a Divine testimony [d], "*For this cause,* or on account of his engaging in the married state, *shall a man leave* both *his father and mother,* when those dear relations of parental and filial tenderness shall take place, *and* shall closely *adhere to his wife; and they two shall be* joined in so intimate an union as to become *one flesh?*" (Gen. ii. 24.) *So that* it appears of persons thus joined together, that *they are no longer two, but one flesh,* and should accordingly regard each other as members of one body. *What God therefore has* thus closely *yoked together let not man separate;* but let the bond of marriage be esteemed as sacred, and incapable of being dissolved by any thing which does not make them cease to be one flesh, by making that of the one common to some third person. (See Whitby, in loc.)

5 6

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. [MARK X.—8, 9.]

7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then

They say unto him, by way of objection against this, *Why then did Moses,* under Divine direction 7

which we render *some uncleanness,* signified *adultery;* whereas the *school of Hillel* explained it of *any matter of dislike.* (See *Selden, Uxor. Heb. lib.* iii. *cap.* 22.) Perhaps a *medium* between both, would have been a juster interpretation than either; for it is certain, that the *phrase* may with peculiar propriety express any *blemish* or *disorder,* which a woman might unjustly and foolishly conceal before marriage, that was afterwards discovered. At least, I think it plain from *our Lord's* answer, that the disciples of *Sammai* were mistaken; which farther appears from the provision the *Mosaic law* made for punishing *adultery* with death.—The interpretation of *Hillel* generally prevailed; and the Pharisees concluding Christ would, as he had done before, declare against *divorces for trivial causes* (Mat. v. 31, 32, and Luke xvi. 18), might hope to expose him to popular resentment for retrenching *a liberty* which the law allowed: but *our Lord* feared not the consequence of doing it.

[d] May in effect be looked upon as a Divine testimony.] I think the ingenious author of *Revelation examined with Candour* solidly argues, from Adam's pronouncing concerning the obligation of a *child's relation to its parent,* which had never then existed, that he spake these words in consequence of some extraordinary *Divine illumination;* which justifies the turn given in the *paraphrase:* nor could he *without a revelation* have known what had passed in his *sleep,* or ever have conjectured the original of *woman* to have been what he so plainly refers to. See *Revelat. exam. with Candour,* Vol. I. Diss. iii. p. 28—33.

[e] *On*

SECT. CXXXV.

tion and inspiration, *command* " a man whose, wife found no favour in his eyes, because he had discovered," as it is there expressed, " some uncleanness in her," or (as it has been generally understood) some cause of distaste and aversion, " *to give* her *a bill of divorce, and* so *to dismiss her?* (Deut. xxiv. 1.)

then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away

Mat. XIX. 7.

Mark X. 3.

And he replied, and said unto them, How is it that you take this matter; or *what did* you alledge that *Moses* did *command you?* Is there any thing in his writings that recommends divorce and separation upon light occasions?

MARK X. 3. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

4 *And* upon this *they said,* If it may not be said that *Moses* does command or recommend it in itself, it is most evident from the passage we have mentioned, that he has *permitted* a man, in some cases, *to write a bill of divorce,* and to give it into his wife's hand, *and dismiss her;* on which foundation thou well knowest how frequently divorces prevail among us, and how justifiable they are generally esteemed.

4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away.

Mat. XIX. 8.

And Jesus answered and said to them, You state the matter now more justly than before; for it amounts merely to a permission: but I must observe to you, that it was *on account of the hardness of your hearts,* and the perverseness of your tempers[e], that *Moses wrote you this precept,* [*and*] *gave you* such *a permission to put away your wives;* knowing that otherwise you might have been tempted to use them intolerably ill: *but,* as I just now told you, *it was not so from the beginning;* and the account which that writer gives of the original constitution of things proves it to be an irregularity, how necessary soever he might find it, in some cases, to tolerate it, or rather, by making it irrevocable, to prevent men's doing it without deep consideration.

MAT. XIX. 8. [And Jesus answered and said unto them], Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, [wrote you this precept, *and*] suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. [MARK X. 5.]

Mark X. 10.

And when the assembly was dismissed, and Jesus was retired from the multitude, as they were sitting together *in the house* where he lodged, *his disciples asked him again of the same matter,* as not being able fully to understand it, or to reconcile it with the precept of Moses.

MARK X. 10. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.

11 *And he says to them,* If you are willing to receive laws from me, you must submit to a greater restraint

11 And he saith unto them, [I say unto

[e] *On account of the hardness of your hearts.*] How much this was the character of the Jewish nation is too apparent. See Exod. xxxiii. 3; xxxiv. 9; Deut. ix. 6; xxxi. 27; Isa. xlviii. 4; Ezek. ii. 4; and Acts vii. 51.—*Our Lord* (as Grotius well observes) strongly intimates that a more tender disposition may justly be expected from *his disciples.*

[f] *Except*

unto you], Whosoever shall put away his wife, [except *it be* for fornication], and [shall] marry another, committeth adultery against her: [and whoso marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery.] [MAT. XIX. 9.]

restraint than Moses laid on the Israelites; for *I* expressly *tell you* (as I formerly did, Mat. v. 32, sect. xxxix. and Luke xvi. 18, sect. cxxiv.), *Whosoever shall dismiss his wife, except* [*it be*] *for whoredom*[f], which is a fundamental breach of the main article of the marriage-covenant, by which they are one flesh, *and shall marry another, commits adultery against her* that was his former wife, and who continues still to be so in the sight of God; *and he that shall marry her who is* so *dismissed*, without a sufficient cause, *commits adultery*. *And*, on the other hand, by a parity of reason, *if a woman*, not injured in the important article just now mentioned, *shall put away her husband*, or extort from him a bill of divorce[g], *and be married to another* man, *she commits adultery*, and as she deserves to be abhorred by men, so must she expect to be punished by God, as guilty of that enormous and detestable crime, if she do not from her very heart repent of it.

SECT. CXXXV.

Mat. XIX. 11.

12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

12

MAT. XIX. 10. His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.

Then *his disciples say unto him, If this be the case between a man and his wife*, and the bond be thus indissoluble, surely *it is not expedient to marry;* since a man may by that means be caught in an inextricable snare, which may make him miserable all the rest of his life.

Mat. xix. 10.

11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given.

But he said to them, All men cannot receive this saying of yours, that it is not expedient to marry; *but* only *they to whom it is given*, as a peculiar gift, to conquer those inclinations towards that state which God, for wise reasons, has wrought into the common constitution of human nature.

11

12 For there are some

For there are [*some*] *eunuchs who were born so from their mother's womb*, and whose natural

12

[f] *Except it be for whoredom*: παι πορνειᾳ.] Though *fornication* committed before marriage, and afterwards discovered, might be supposed to justify a divorce, *adultery* must much more evidently do it; and therefore it is plain the word must be taken in the extent which is here given it. (See *note*[f] on Mat. v. 32. Vol. VI. p. 212.) But it is by a dangerous latitude of interpretation that *Milton* (*Prose Works*, page 105) would explain the word as signifying *any thing which should be to the husband as grievous and intolerable as whoredom*.—The case of *obstinate desertion*, where the husband cannot by law recover his wife, which was the celebrated case of the pious *Galeacius Caracciolus*, and which we find to be supposed in 1 Cor. vii. 15, is quite of a different nature; nor can a man under such a calamity be said to *put away* his wife.——Erasmus has a remarkable *note* on Mat. xix. 3, which shews he was not far from Milton's opinion.

[g] *If a woman shall put away her husband.*] Though it is certain that the *Jewish law* did not put it into a *woman's* power to divorce her husband, it is plain from Josephus that it was done, not only by several ladies of distinguished rank, but even that *his own wife* did it (see Dr. *Lardner's Credibility*, part i. Vol. II. page 890, *note* d), having probably learned of the *Roman women*, who in this age are known to have practised it in the most scandalous manner. See *Juv. Sat.* vi. ver. 222—230. Compare 1 Sam. xxv. 44, and 1 Cor. vii. 13.

SECT. CXXXV.

natural temper and inclination is in this respect peculiar; *and there are* [*some*] *eunuchs who were made eunuchs by* the wickedness of *men*, who drive on that scandalous traffick which the luxury and effeminacy of the eastern world has rendered so common; *and there are* [*some*] *eunuchs who have*, as it were, *made themselves eunuchs on account of the kingdom of heaven*, that is, who, by a resolute guard on their appetites and passions, have conquered the propensities of nature, that being free from the incumbrances of marriage, and devoting themselves to a life of more sublime devotion, they might promote the interest of my gospel. (Compare 1 Cor. vii. 7, 37.) *He* therefore, on the whole, *that* finds he *is able to receive* [*this saying*], *let him receive it*; or let him that is in his own conscience persuaded that he can glorify God most by a single life, choose it. Others may, and ought to marry; but let none lightly rush into that state on a supposition that the bond of it may be broken through at pleasure.

Mat. XIX. 12.

some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 4 FROM what we have been reading we may justly take occasion to adore the wisdom and goodness of Divine Providence in creating the human species *male and female*, and providing for his new formed creature *Adam* so suitable and so amiable a companion, to enliven every other object of delight, and to crown the pleasures of *paradise* itself.

Let us also acknowledge the apparent interposition of a wise and kind providence in maintaining such a *proportion* between the *sexes*, even to this day, which so apparently tends to the benefit of both, as well as to the support of the race in future ages; as also in perpetuating in their hearts through succeeding generations 5 that *mutual tenderness* for each other which the purest bosoms may feel and avow, and which is the foundation of such an union of souls as no other friendship will admit.

6 Let those who are *married*, considering the indissoluble bond by which *God has joined them together*, make it their constant care to promote the comfort and happiness of each other: and let them most cautiously guard against every degree of *contention*, or even of *distaste*, which might at length occasion an alienation in their affections, and render so close a bond proportionably grievous.

11, 12 Let none rashly run into these important engagements, nor determine their choice by light considerations, of a low and transitory nature

nature. And if any, on the whole, prefer the freedom of a *single life* to a state which, with its peculiar comforts, must necessarily have its peculiar cares and trials too, let them diligently improve that disengagement, as an obligation to seek the *kingdom of God* with greater ardour, and to pursue its interests with more active zeal and application. SECT. CXXXV.

To conclude; since it appears in this respect, as well as in some others, that the *gospel* revokes some indulgences which the *law of Moses* gave, let us endeavour to form our hearts by Divine grace to a wisdom, seriousness, and spirituality, which may suit this nobler dispensation; and while we are reading the precept of the *Jewish* legislator, let us remember we have a sublimer *Master*, and are to *do* and forbear *more than others.* (Mat. v. 47.) Mark X. 11, 12

SECT. CXXXVI.

Christ blesses the little children that were brought to him, and rebukes his disciples who would have forbid them. Mat. XIX. 13, —15. Mark X. 13—16. Luke XVIII. 15—17.

MARK X. 13.

AND they brought, [LUKE, infants *and*] young children to him, that he should touch them [*or* put *his* hands on them, and pray:] and [LUKE, when] *his* disciples, [LUKE, *saw it*, they] rebuked those that brought *them*. [MAT. XIX. 13. — LUKE XVIII. 15.

MARK X. 13.

AND while Jesus continued here, as the inhabitants of the neighbouring country on the banks of Jordan found their esteem for him continually increasing on their acquaintance with him, (John x. 41, 42, p. 92,) *they brought to him*, not only the sick, that they might be healed, (Mat. xix. 2, p. 94,) but also several *infants* [*and*] other *young children*, who, though they could walk and speak, yet were not capable of understanding his doctrine, *that he might touch them*, [*or*] *lay his hands upon them* in a solemn manner *and pray* for them [a]; not doubting but prayers so acceptable to God as his would prevail both for their present and future happiness. *And when his disciples*, and particularly the apostles, who were about him, *saw it*, *they rebuked those that brought them*, as apprehending them too troublesome, and thinking it beneath the dignity of so great a Prophet to concern himself about such little creatures, who were incapable of receiving any instruction from him. SECT. CXXXVI. Mark X. 13.

But

[a] *Lay his hands upon them, and pray.*] This was a *rite* that was very early used, particularly by those who stood in any superior relation, when they were praying for a blessing on young persons. See Gen. xlviii. 14—20.—I see no reason to think, with Elsner, that they were brought to *Christ* for the *cure* of some malady; for in that case it is not to be imagined that the *disciples* would have been so inhumane as to prohibit them.

SECT. CXXXVI.

Mark X. 14.

But Jesus seeing it, was greatly displeased, and moved with some degree of indignation against his disciples; for he had a tender love to children, and well knew that a proper notice of these might turn to some valuable account [b]; *and* therefore he *said to them, Let the little children alone, and do not* now, or at any other convenient time, *hinder them from coming to me*: I am pleased, rather than offended, to see them near me; *for of such is the kingdom of God*: persons of such a character are the true subjects of my kingdom, and heirs of eternal glory, to which many little children are received; and in token of it the children of believing parents are to be admitted into my church by baptism [c].

14 But when Jesus saw *it*, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. [MAT. XIX. 14. LUKE XVIII.—16.

15 And *verily, I say unto you*, as I have formerly told you, (Mat. xviii. 3, 4. sect. xciii.) and would now have you to attend with seriousness while I repeat it, *Whosoever shall not* be willing to *receive the kingdom of God*, or the gospel dispensation, and the happiness it promises, *as a little child*, divesting himself of those prejudices and those secular views which men contract in their riper years, that he may come, as it were, to the humility and meekness, the simplicity and teachableness of a little child (compare Psal. cxxxi. 2,) *he shall not in any wise*, or on any terms, *enter into it*, be his genius ever so sublime, or his circumstances in life ever so considerable.

15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall [in no wise] enter therein. [LUKE XVIII. 17.]

16 *And* having said this, he would no longer be detained from shewing his regard unto these little

16 And he [LUKE, called

[b] *Knew that a proper notice of these &c.*] Christ's shewing his regard in such a manner to them not only must have been exceedingly pleasing to the *parents*; but the memory of this condescension might make tender and lasting impressions on the *children* themselves; and the sight must be very edifying and encouraging to *other young persons* who might happen to be present; not to say how instructive this *gentleness to children* may be to *ministers*, and how much their usefulness may, or might have been, promoted by a due regard to it.—Nicephorus tells us that the celebrated *Ignatius*, afterwards Bishop of Antioch, was one of these *infants*.—*Our Lord* might reasonably be the more *displeased* with *his disciples* for endeavouring to prevent their being brought, as he had so lately *set a child* among them, and insisted on the necessity of their being made *conformable* to it. Mat. xviii. 2, 3. sect. xciii. Vol. VI. p. 487.—I am obliged to Dr. *Scott's* late *Version* of *St. Matthew's* Gospel, which, according to the manner of the learned and ingenious author, is exact to a wonder, for the *alteration* I have made *here*, and for some *other changes*, which I take this opportunity of acknowledging with due gratitude.

[c] *For of such is the kingdom of God, &c.*] I acknowledge these words will not of themselves prove *infant baptism* to be an institution of Christ; but if that appears from *other scriptures* to be the case (which I think most probable,) there will be proportionable reason to believe that *our Lord* might here intend some reference to it; and I cannot approve of rendering τοιουτων, *such as resemble these*. It is the part of a faithful *translator* not to limit the sense of the *original*, nor to fix what it leaves ambiguous.

called them unto him, *and*] took them up in his arms [and] put *his* hands upon them, and blessed them; [and departed thence] [MAT. XIX. 15. LUKE XVIII. 16.—]

tle children, but *having called them to him*, and ordered the infants to be brought, *he took them up in his arms*, tenderly embracing them with a holy complacency and love; *and*, as a farther token of the overflowing kindness and benevolence of his heart towards them, he *laid his hands upon them, and blessed them*, recommending them in a solemn manner to the Divine blessing and favour; which accordingly descended upon them, to strengthen their constitutions, and to sanctify their hearts. *And*, after this, *he departed from thence* to another place in the neighbourhood, where the young ruler attended him, as will be presently related.

SECT. CXXXVI.

Mark X. 16.

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us make a pause here, that we may more attentively review this delightful and instructive sight; that we may see this compassionate *Shepherd of Israel*, thus *gathering the lambs in his arms and carrying them in his bosom* with all the tokens of tender regard, (Isa. xl. 11.) *rebuking his disciples* who forbade their coming and *laying his* gracious *hands upon them to bless them.* How condescending and engaging a behaviour! how encouraging and amiable an image! Mark X. 16. 14

Let his *ministers* view it, to teach them a becoming regard to *the lambs* of their *flock*, who should early be taken notice of and instructed; and for and with whom they should frequently *pray*; remembering how often Divine grace takes possession of the heart in the years of *infancy*, and *sanctifies* the children of God almost *from the womb.* Let every first impression made upon their tender minds be cherished; and let not those whom *Christ* himself is ready to receive be disregarded by *his servants*, who upon all occasions should *be gentle unto all*, and *apt to teach.* (2 Tim. ii. 24.)

Let *parents* view this sight with pleasure and thankfulness: let it encourage them to *bring their children to Christ* by faith, and to commit them to him in *baptism*, and by prayer. And if he who *has the keys of death and the unseen world*, (Rev. i. 18.) see fit to remove those dear creatures from us in their early days, let the remembrance of this story comfort us, and teach us to hope that he who so graciously *received these children* has not forgotten ours, but that they are sweetly *fallen asleep in him*, and will be the everlasting objects of his care and love; *for of such is the kingdom of God.* 13 14

Let *children* especially observe this. The great and glorious 14

SECT. CXXXVI. *Redeemer* did not *despise these little ones;* nay, he was *much displeased* with those who would have prevented their being *brought to him.* As kindly would he, no doubt, have received you, ye dear *children,* who read or hear this; as kindly will he still receive you, if you go to him in the sincerity of your hearts, and ask his blessing in humble and earnest prayer. Though you see not *Christ,* he sees and hears *you*; he is now present with you, to receive you, to bless you, and to save you. Happy the weakest of you when lodged in the *arms of Christ!* nothing can *pluck you from thence,* or ever hurt you there.

15 In a word, let us *all* commit ourselves to him; and let us be disposed to *become as little children,* if we desire to *enter into his kingdom.* Let us not govern ourselves by the vain maxims of a corrupt and degenerate age. Let not pride, ambition, lust, or avarice, possess, torment, and enslave our minds; but, with the amiable *simplicity of children,* let us put ourselves into the wise and kind hands of *Jesus,* as our Guardian, and refer ourselves to his pastoral and parental care, to be clothed and fed, to be guided and disposed of, as he shall see fit. For this purpose, O God, may we be *born again* by thy *Spirit,* and *formed anew* by thy *grace!* since by this method alone we can be *made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,* (Col. i. 12.) and be so *the children of God,* as to be at length *the children of the resurrection.*

SECT. CXXXVII.

A rich young man applying himself to Christ for direction in the way to eternal life, and afterwards parting with him out of regard to his possessions, gives our Lord an occasion of cautioning his disciples concerning the danger of riches. Mat. XIX. 16, *to the end.* Mark X. 17—31. Luke XVIII. 18—30.

MARK X. 17.

SECT. CXXXVII. *AND as he went out* from thence [a], *into the way* to some other place which he designed to visit, *behold,* a most remarkable occurrence happened; for *there came one,* even a *certain magistrate,* or ruler, who was a young person in very plentiful circumstances, *running* with an eager desire to converse with Jesus before he left that place; *and* he no sooner was come near him,

Mark X. 17.

MARK X. 17.

AND when he was gone forth into the way, [behold,] there came one [LUKE, a certain ruler] running, and

[a] *As he went out* from thence.] Both Matthew and Luke relate this story of the *young ruler* immediately after that in the preceding *section;* but Mark is more determinate than either of them in the *connection,* and more circumstantial in the *narration.*

[b] *Good*

and kneeled to him, and asked him, [Luke, saying,] Good Master, what [good thing] shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life? [Mat. XIX. 16. Luke XVIII. 18.]

him, but, *kneeling down to him* with the humblest respect, *he asked him* with great reverence and earnestness, *saying, Good Master,* [b] I am come to thee as a most wise and gracious Teacher, and beseech thee to answer me a question of the highest importance: *What good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?* for nothing lies with so much weight upon my mind as this, and I am determined to secure it at any rate.

sect. cxxxvii. Mark X. 17.

18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is* God: [but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.] [Mat. XIX. 17. Luke XVIII. 19.]

And Jesus, upon this, *said to him, Why dost thou call me good* [c], whom thou regardest only as a prophet sent from God, and dost not look upon to be any more than a mere man? Thou shouldest remember upon all occasions, that *none is* perfectly *good, but one* glorious and immutable Being, [*even*] the ever blessed and eternal *God;* nor can any man or angel deserve the title of good in any degree of comparison with him, from whom originally stream forth all those rays of goodness which are but imperfectly reflected from them. *But* as to the question thou hast asked, *If thou art* resolutely *determined to enter into life,* it is absolutely necessary thou shouldst *keep the* Divine *commandments;* the perfect observance of which alone can give thee a legal claim to it, and in the wilful neglect of which thou must never on any terms expect it. 18

19 [He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said,] Thou knowest the commandments, [Thou shalt do no murder; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not bear false witness;] Defraud not; Honour

Then the young ruler, that *he* might fully understand the mind of Jesus, eagerly *says to him, Which* are those commandments on the observation of which my eternal life depends? 19

Jesus said, Thou undoubtedly *knowest the commandments* which God gave to Moses, written on the tables of stone at Mount Sinai, among which those of the second table, however neglected by the Pharisees, are by no means to be forgotten; such as, "*Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not bear false witness* against thy neighbour; *Thou shalt not* covet any part of his property, or take any methods to *defraud* him;"

b *Good Master.*] Wolfius observes that this was a *title* which the *Jewish rabbies* affected; which, if it were indeed so, might be an additional reason for *our Lord's* remark upon it.

c *Why dost thou call me good?*] It is certain that some very ancient *manuscripts* read this clause, Τι με ερωτας περι του αγαθου, *Why dost thou ask me what good thing is to be done?* But neither the number of *copies* nor the turn of *our Lord's answer* will by any means admit of such a reading.

d *Thou*

SECT. CXXXVII.

him[d];" and that which indeed stands in the front of all these, "*Honour thy father and thy mother.*" These are the six last commandments, which I now recommend to thy consideration; *and* they may all be summed up in that one comprehensive precept, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" (See Exod. xx. 12—17. and Lev. xix. 18.)

Mark X. 19.

Honour thy father and [Luke, thy] mother; [and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.] [Mat. XIX. 18, 19. Luke XVIII. 20.]

20 *And the young man*, not apprehending the large extent and spiritual meaning of these precepts, *replied*, with great cheerfulness and confidence, *and said to him, Master*, I have been early taught these precepts, and may venture to say that *I have* conscientiously *observed all these* even *from my infancy*[e], and have abstained from each of the vices and immoralities condemned in them: *what* then *do I further need*, in order to secure the glorious prize after which I am seeking?

20 And [the young man] answered and said unto him, Master, all these [things] have I observed from my youth: [What lack I yet?] [Mat. XIX. 20. Luke XVIII. 21.]

21 *And Jesus, looking stedfastly upon him, loved him*, and felt the emotions of complacency mingled with tender compassion, in regard to so young a person, who had maintained so honourable a character in such an elevated station of life, and was under such concern about another world; yet at the same time, amidst all these hopeful circumstances, was governed still by a secret fondness for the possessions he enjoyed in this: *and* as our Lord thought fit to manifest this fondness to himself and others, *when he had heard these things* which have been mentioned above, *he* was pleased to call him forth to a peculiar trial; and therefore *said unto him*, Thus far

21 Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and [Luke, when he heard these things, he] said unto him, [Luke,

[d] *Thou shalt not defraud.*] As Mark seems to put this for the *tenth commandment*, Dr. *Hammond*, *(in loc.)* and Archbishop *Tillotson* (see his *Works*, Vol. II. p. 257) suppose it a key to the sense of those words, *Thou shalt not covet*; the meaning of which, they argue, is as if it had been said, "Thou shalt not be so desirous of thy neighbour's possessions as to be willing to injure the owner by depriving him of them, that thou mayest secure them to thyself." But the apostle Paul strongly intimates that the sense of *that command* is much more extensive (Rom. vii. 7.) and as the *preceding commandments* had forbid to invade the *life*, the *bed*, the *property*, or *reputation* of another, so *this* requires a guard on those irregular *appetites* and *passions* which might by insensible degrees lead men to *murder*, *adultery*, *theft*, or *false witness*.

[e] *I have observed all these, even from my infancy.*] The phrase ἀπὸ νεότητος may indeed be very exactly rendered *from my youth*: but as he was yet but *a young man*, it is probably here put for *infancy* or *childhood*. It is plain he did not understand the spiritual meaning and extent of the *law* according to *our Lord's* explication of it in his *sermon on the mount*, or he would not have pleaded his exact obedience to it. But the Jews in general seem to have thought that, if they abstained from gross crimes, sacrifices might atone for smaller neglects or offences. And *this compound* seems to have been that *righteousness of their own* in which, to their final ruin, they trusted for *justification* before God, in the neglect of *the righteousness which is of God by faith*.—Compare Rom. x. 3. and Phil. iii. 9.

t One

[LUKE, yet] one thing thou lackest: [if thou wilt be perfect,] go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow me. [MAT. XIX. 21. LUKE XVIII. 22.]

far it is well; but *yet*, alas, *One thing thou* still *wantest*[f], in order to prove that integrity of soul and that prevailing love to God, without which none can be entitled to future blessedness: by me he now commands thee, *if thou wilt be perfect*, and determine to submit to all that he requires, to *go thy way* immediately, and *sell all thy possessions*[g], valuable as they are, *and* to *distribute* the money which arises from the sale of them *to the poor;* do this, *and thou shalt have* an infinitely more excellent *treasure in heaven: and*, in the assured hope of this, I call thee to *come* and *take up the cross, and* with courage and resolution to *follow me* as my constant attendant, though it should be even at the expence of thy life as well as thine estate.

SECT. CXXXVII.

Mark X. 21.

22 [But when the young man heard that saying,] he was sad, and went away [LUKE, very sorrowful;] for he [LUKE, was very rich, *and*] had great possessions. [MAT. XIX. 22. LUKE XVIII. 23.]

But when the young man heard that saying, and saw that all his gay and delightful prospects for life must be given up in a moment, *he was* exceedingly concerned and *troubled* at it: *and* he *went away in great sorrow; for he was very rich*, [*and*] *had great possessions*, which were lately fallen into his hands; and how desirous soever he was of eternal life, he could not resolve to secure it at so great an expence. 22

23 And [LUKE, when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful,] he looked round about, and saith to his disciples, How hardly shall

And when Jesus saw that, though *he was very sorrowful*, yet he chose rather to go away than to part with his estate in the views of eternal happiness, *he looked round* on all that were *about* him, *and said to his disciples*, Observe this instructive incident, and learn to make this reflection upon it; *How hardly shall they that possess* 23

[f] *One thing thou wantest.*] *Our Lord* does not say he *wanted but one thing;* so that nothing can be concluded from hence against the necessity of an acquaintance with *some truths*, of which *this youth*, hopeful and amiable as he was, appears to have been ignorant. But it was to be charged on *that want* of sincere piety which his conduct presently discovered, that he did not come to the knowledge of them by a continued and submissive attendance on the teaching of Christ. See John vii. 17. sect. xcix.

[g] *Sell all thy possessions.*] It is strange that the learned and accurate Dr. Clarke should suppose that Christ did not demand this, in order to his being in a state of acceptance with God, but in order to his giving a testimony of exalted piety; or, at least, as *necessary* at that time to his being *a preacher* of the gospel. *Our Lord's* manner of proposing the trial, and his reflection on the *young man's going away*, plainly shew that it was in those circumstances *necessary* to his *salvation*. And indeed it is most apparent, that though God does not in fact require every man to *distribute all his goods* to others, and so in effect to become one of the number of *poor* to be relieved out of his own possessions, yet sincere virtue and piety demand an habitual readiness, not only to sacrifice *our possessions*, but *our lives*, at the command of God; and Providence does in fact call some out to trials as severe as this.—*His refusal* plainly shewed he valued his *worldly possessions* more than *eternal life;* and *our Lord*, with great wisdom, took this direct and convincing method of manifesting both to himself and others, that secret insincerity and carnality of temper which prevailed under all these specious pretences and promising appearances.

[h] *Easier*

SECT. CXXXVII.

Mark X. 23.

possess the *riches* of this world *enter into the kingdom of God!* Dwell upon the thought, and repeat it, in order, if possible, to wean your hearts from these delusive vanities which often prove so fatal to the soul: for *verily I say unto you,* So many snares attend such circumstances, *that a rich man will hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven,* or be brought to such a relish for the gospel, and its future blessings, as either to resign, or improve his worldly possessions, in such a manner as the laws of that kingdom require.

shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! [Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.] [MAT. XIX. 23.—— LUKE XVIII. 24.]

24 *And the disciples were* quite *astonished at his words;* for they were ready to imagine that, ere long, all the rich and great people of the country would appear for their Lord, and fix him on the throne of Israel.

24 And the disciples were astonished at his words.—

But Jesus, answering again to that surprise which he saw in their countenances, *says to them* in the most condescending manner, My dear *children,* when you consider what I said more attentively, you will not so much wonder at it: for it is manifest that the generality of rich men place their chief confidence and delight in the things of this present world; and you know that true religion requires a heart abstracted from them, and placed on nobler objects: judge then for yourselves, *how hard is it for them that* thus *trust in* their *riches, to enter into the kingdom of God! And* therefore *I say to you again,* in yet strongsr terms, that vour common proverb may have its place here, That *it is easier* for the huge cable of a ship, or even *for a camel to go through the eye of a needle*[h], *than* it is *for a rich man* to conquer the snares of his estate and the corruptions of his heart so far as *to enter into the kingdom of God,* and become the faithful, obedient subject of his Son.

—But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 [And again I say unto you,] It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.—— [MAT. XIX. 24. LUKE XVIII. 25.]

26 *And when his disciples heard* [*this*] repetition and illustration of what was before said, *they were struck into exceeding great and inexpressible amazement*

26 And when his [disciples heard *it,*] they were [exceedingly amazed, *and*] astonished

h *Easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.*] Theophylact, and after him some other *critics,* for καμηλον read καμιλον, which they explain of *a cable rope,* which might appear more fitly to be mentioned as what *could not pass through a needle's eye.* Others very precariously assert that there was near Jerusalem a low *gate* called *the needle's eye,* through which *a camel could no' pass* unless his load were taken off. But I see no reason for departing from the received *reading* and *interpretation;* nor is there any thing in this *proverbial expression,* as it here stands, but what is very agreeable to the *eastern* taste, and may be paralleled in other *Jewish writers.* See Dr. *Lightfoot's Hor. Hebr.* on Mat. xix. 24. where it is shewn there was a *Jewish proverb* to the same purpose of the *elephant,*

nished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? [MAT. XIX. 25. LUKE XVIII. 26.]

amazement at it, *saying one to another*, And *who then can be saved?* Who that are rich can ever get to heaven? And what a discouragement will it be to others to see the rich and the great neglecting salvation, and turning the means of their happiness and usefulness into the instruments of their destruction?

SECT. CXXXVII.

Mark X. 26.

27 And Jesus looking upon them, saith [unto them], With men [this is] impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible, [Luke, *even* the things which are impossible with men.] [MAT. XIX. 26. LUKE XVIII. 27.]

But Jesus, looking stedfastly upon them, saith unto them, With men it is indeed *impossible*, and the strength of corrupt nature alone will not be sufficient to encounter such difficulties as these; *but* it is *not* impossible *with God* to animate their hearts against them: *for* his grace has an almighty energy, and *with God all things are possible* [*even*] *the things which are* most *impossible with men*, and seem so insurmountable to human strength as to be reckoned utterly impracticable; to him therefore let the rich and poor unite their supplications, that each may be rendered superior to the snares which attend their respective circumstances.

27

28 Then Peter [answered, and] began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee! [What shall we have therefore?] [MAT. XIX. 27. LUKE XVIII. 28.]

Then Peter replied, and with some warmth and confidence *began to say unto him*, Well, Master, *behold*, we have done, what this youth, hopeful as he seemed, had not the resolution to do; for though indeed we had not much, *we have left all* the little that we had in the world, *and* have at all adventures *followed thee* with the sincerest zeal and affection: *What* reward *shall we therefore have?* For we persuade ourselves, thou wilt not permit us finally to be losers in thy cause.

28

MAT. XIX. 28. And Jesus [answered and] said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man

And Jesus answering said to them, You may depend upon it, that you shall not, but will be found, upon the whole, to have acted the wisest part; for *verily I say unto you*, and assure you of it, *that you who have followed me* in my humiliation, shall at length be distinguished by proportionable honours: And *in the* great *renovation* of all things[i], *when* all the children of God shall, as it

Mat. XIX. 28.

[i] *In the* great *renovation* of all things.] I have given what appears to me the most natural sense of this difficult passage. Mr. Fleming agrees with *our translators* in connecting the words ἐν τῇ παλιγγενεσίᾳ with the preceding clause; and *paraphrases* the verse thus, "As for you, my apostles, who have followed me in this new state of the church, which is to be brought to the birth, when I am to ascend to heaven, that I may govern the world from thence by my word and Spirit, ye shall be to the whole *Christian church*, what the *twelve heads* of the *tribes* were of old to the Jewish nation: my followers shall appeal to your decisions, as the rule of their faith and practice." (*Fleming's Christology*, Vol. I. p. 28.) But it seems plain to me that *our Lord* refers in the following words to the time of *final retribution*, which he elsewhere

SECT. CXXXVII.

it were, be born anew from their graves; when created nature shall put on its fairest forms to receive them, and *the Son of man* presiding over that august assembly, *shall sit on the throne of his glory*, exalted above the highest angels of God, *you also*, my faithful apostles, *shall sit* around me *upon twelve* radiant *thrones*[k], *judging the twelve tribes of Israel*; concurring joyfully with me in the sentence which shall then be passed, on the Jewish nation, and on all the professed members of my church, as they have been sincere, or faithless, in their profession, and in the observance of those laws, which you by authority from me, their exalted Sovereign, shall have given them.

Mat. XIX. 28.

man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. [MARK X. 29 LUKE XVIII. 29.—]

Mark X. 29.

And though some peculiar rewards are reserved for you, with regard to your apostolic character; yet *there is no man* in any state or condition of life, whether in this or in any future age of the world, *who hath left*, or shall hereafter leave, his *house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands*; in one word, none who shall undergo the loss of any temporal advantages, *for the sake of the kingdom of God*, [*that is*] *for my name's sake* 30 *and the gospel's*; *But he shall receive manifold more* for it, in the inward satisfaction and Divine consolations attending real religion, [*yea*] even *an hundred-fold, now in this present time*, more than all the comfort he could naturally have found in *houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands*; such shall be the delights of a good conscience, and the secret manifestations of Divine acceptance and favour, which shall mingle themselves *with* all the *persecutions* he shall here endure[l]; *and* when

MARK X.—29. [And] there is no man, that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, [LUKE, for the kingdom of God's sake, *that is*,] for my [name's] sake, and the gospel's, [MAT. XIX. 29.—LUKE XVIII.—29.]

30 But he shall receive [LUKE, manifold more, *yea*] an hundred-fold now in this [LUKE, present] time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world

where mentions as that in which he should *sit on the throne of his glory*. Mat. xxv. 31, 32.—Mr. Pierce (on Heb. i. 5.) follows Brennius in expounding *the regeneration* of the time when Christ should be (as it were) *begotten again* by his *resurrection from the dead*; but the criticism seems very unnatural, and the objection mentioned above lies against it in its full force.—The laboured argument which *Dr. Thomas Burnet* deduces from hence, to prove the *renovation of the earth* at the *millennium*, is very precarious; since the words will so fairly admit of another sense, referring them to the general *resurrection*. See *Burnet's Theory*, Vol. II. p. 229, 230.

[k] *Shall sit upon twelve thrones.*] *Our Lord* well knew that Judas would fall from his office and dignity; but as Matthias filled his place, and so stood intitled to the promise, he did not think it fit to enter into any particular distinction; but speaks to the whole body of the *apostles* in words which he knew would be accomplished to the far greater part of those to whom they were addressed.

[l] *Shall receive—an hundred-fold now in this present time—with persecutions.*] Dr. *Massey*, in his *Vernacula Sacra*, p. 18, proposes a very different version of this period, *viz.* "*Though he may not receive* [ἐαν μη λαβῃ] *an hundred-fold* (or a sufficient recompence)

world to come [shall inherit] eternal life.—[MAT. XIX.—29. LUKE XVIII. 30.]

when they are over, as they will quickly be, *in the world to come he shall inherit everlasting life*, and be for ever enjoying that happiness, which God has prepared for all his children, especially for such heroic souls as these, when all earthly relations are ceased, and the world itself is dissolved.

SECT. CXXXVII.

Mark X. 30.

31 But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last [*shall be*] first. [MAT. XIX. 30.]

But such will be the issue and event of things under the gospel, that *many* [*who are*] *first* in the advantages and privileges they enjoy, *shall* notwithstanding this fall short of others, and *be last* in the great day of accounts; *and* those who are *the last*, *shall* prove in this respect to *be* the *first:* For some, from whom it might be least expected, shall embrace the gospel, and courageously endure the greatest hardships for it; while others, with far greater advantages, shall reject it, and under much stronger engagements shall desert it. 31

IMPROVEMENT.

WHO can behold, without weeping eyes, and a bleeding heart, *this lovely youth perishing in sin*[m]*!* What could have appeared more promising, than this solicitous *concern* about *eternal life*, in a *young man*, rich in the possessions, and high in the honours of the present world! To see him *running* with such eagerness to the feet of a *Redeemer*, *kneeling down*, with such humility before him, calling upon him by so honourable a *title*, and professing so sincere a desire of instruction, could not but lead us to conclude, *Surely this man was not far from the kingdom of God;* nor do we wonder, that *Jesus beholding him loved him.* Who would not have looked on such an object with complacency! Who would not have expected, that *this pleasant plant* should have *brought forth grapes;* but behold, *it brought forth wild grapes!* (Isa. v. 2.) So have we seen, in the compass, perhaps, of our small observation and experience, many a *fair blossom* fall withering to the ground. So have

Mark X. 17.

21

compence) *now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands;* yet *after persecution,* [μετα διωγμων] *and in the world to come,* he shall receive *eternal life.*" But I neither think the authority of Theophylact sufficient to warrant our substituting διωγμων for διωγμων; nor can I find any satisfactory example of such an *ellipsis* as this *version* supposes in the *original*, if that variation were allowed; to which we may add, that the parallel passages both in Mat. and Luke lie strongly against the *version* proposed.

m *Lovely youth perishing in sin.*] Dr. Watts's excellent *Sermon* on this subject, and with this title, will, I doubt not, be recollected by multitudes on this occasion. There is so much beauty and pathos, so much wisdom and piety in it, that I could wish it might be attentively perused, especially by every one of my *younger readers;* for I would hope there are few capable of reading it without some serious impressions.

SECT. CXXXVII. have the hopes of *ministers*, and *parents*, and other religious friends, been disappointed, with respect to many *young persons*, adorned with a variety of amiable qualifications, yet *lacking one thing*, and *parting with Christ* when put to the trial, after all the regard they have shewn to his name, and all the pleasing expectations they have given of a willingness to serve him. O my *young Reader*, whoever thou art, I earnestly pray, that thou mayest not be added to that number!

Mark X. 21.

19, 20 This unhappy *youth* imagined himself in the certain *way of salvation*, because he was free from the stains of fraud and injustice, of adultery and theft, of perjury and murder, or any other gross and infamous sin. But behold, how awful a method *Christ* takes, to open to him that *insincerity of heart*, which he seems himself not to have known. Observe, how strange a command he
21 gives him, *to sell all, and distribute to the poor.* We cannot say, that the very same is directly required of us; yet by this order that was given to him, we are obliged to part with *our all*, when it cannot be preserved with a good conscience; and by the general rules of *Christianity*, and its fundamental precepts, we are in duty bound, conscientiously to use, not only a *little part* of our substance, but even *the whole* of it for God, as *stewards* who are another day to give up a strict account for all. And if we like not *Christ* and *glory* on these terms, *our end* will be no better than *his*. Of him we read, that after all his morality, and all his zeal, *he went away* from *Christ*, (though *sorrowful,*) *because he had great*
22 *possessions.* Oh dear-bought *wealth*, which was the price of his soul!

Let us look upon him, and receive instruction; let us learn to be upon our guard against *this vain world*, that specious *harlot, who hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her;* (Prov. vii. 26.) How universally are *riches* desired, how eagerly are they pursued, by persons in all stations and of all professions of life! Yet what do they generally prove but shining mischief and gilded ruin! If we believe the incarnate
23—25 *wisdom of God, they make our salvation exceeding hazardous.* Yet who does not wish for them? Who does not think that he has wisdom and grace enough to stand the danger? But God knows otherwise, and therefore he keeps, or makes, so many of *his children poor.*—Let them be contented with their safer state; and let those who are *rich* be importunate with God for those influences
27 of his *grace* which can effect those things that are *impossible with men.*

On the whole, let us not think much of any thing which *Christ* demands, knowing that whatever we may *lose*, or whatever we
29 may *resign*, we shall *gain far more* by his favour. The *testimony*

of

of a good conscience before him, a life of *friendship* with God, the consolations of his Spirit, and the hopes of his glory, will yield, even for the present, *an hundred-fold* more satisfaction than the possessions of the greatest *riches*, or the enjoyment of the most tender and beloved *relatives*. How much more abundantly then will all be repaid in the *heavenly state!* And, if we cannot trust the *promise* of *our Lord* for it, we are no more real *Christians* than if we were publicly to worship *mammon*, or *Plutus*, with all the idolatrous rites of the ancient heathens. SECT. CXXXVII. Ver. 30

SECT. CXXXVIII.

Christ, by the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, warns the Jews against envying the Gentiles those equal privileges to which they should be called in the Messiah's kingdom. Mat. XX. 1—16.

MAT. XX. 1.

FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

MAT. XX. 1.

IN order to illustrate the observation which our Lord had just been making, "that many who were first should be last, and many last should be first," he added the following parable, and said, This will be found to be the case in many instances; *for the kingdom of heaven*, or the gospel-dispensation, *is like*, or may be fitly represented by the similitude of *a man*[a] *that was the master of a family, who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard*, at the time when the vintage was to be gathered in. SECT. CXXXVIII. Mat. XX. 1.

2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

And having agreed with the labourers for the usual price of *a* denarius, or Roman *penny, a day*[b], *he sent them into his vineyard*, to be employed there in his service. 2

3 And he went out about the third hour, and

And going out again *about the third hour*[c], 3 (or

[a] *Is like*, or may be fitly represented by the similitude of *a man*.] See *note* i on Luke vii. 32, Vol. VI. p. 307.—Those who are acquainted with the *eastern* manners know that *this parable* is exactly suited to them in a variety of circumstances, which many learned *commentators* have observed, but which it does not seem necessary to enumerate here. See *Petav. Dogmat. Theolog.* Vol. I. p. 305, *& seq.*

[b] *A* denarius, a Roman *penny, a day*.] It seems from hence that this (which was in value about *seven-pence halfpenny* of our money) was the usual price of a day's service among the Jews; as *Tacitus* tells us it was among the Romans. (*Annal.* i. 17.) It is therefore justly mentioned, Rev. vi. 6. as a proof of the great scarcity of provisions, when *a measure* or *chœnix of wheat*, which was the usual allowance to one man for a day, and was about an *English quart*, was sold at that price.

[c] *About the third hour*.] *Dr. Whitby* in his *Paraphrase* explains the first call *in the morning*, of the earliest days of Christ's preaching; that of the *third hour*, as referring to the *mission* of the *apostles* when they were first sent forth to preach among the Jews; those of the *sixth* and *ninth* hours, of their preaching the gospel, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, to the Jews in Judea, and then to the *dispersed* in other parts; and that of the *eleventh hour*, of the calling of the Gentiles: but this seems an excessive nicety of distinction.—The Jews were ready to look upon themselves with complacency,

SECT. CXXXVIII.

Mat. XX. 4.

(or at nine in the morning) *he saw others standing unemployed in the market*, where it was customary for servants to stand, in order to their being hired. *And he said to them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is* the *reasonable* value of your labour[d], *I will* be sure to *give you. And they went away* to their work without any more particular agreement.

and saw others standing idle in the market-place,

4 And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever[e] is right, I will give you. And they went their way.

5 And *again going out about the sixth and ninth hour* (or at noon, and at three in the afternoon) *he did the same*, and sent others to work on the same general promise of giving them as much as they could reasonably expect.

5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

6 *And* once more *about the eleventh hour*, (or at five in the afternoon) *going out* of his house, *he* returned to the market, and *found others standing unemployed: and he says to them, Why do ye stand here* and do nothing? Do you choose thus to trifle away your time, and continue *the whole day unemployed? They say unto him*, No; but we continue here, *because no one has hired us* to any kind of labour. Then *he says to them, Go ye also into the vineyard*, where you may be employed, *and whatsoever is* fit and *reasonable* to be given for your labour, *you shall receive.*

6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, *that* shall ye receive.

8 *Now when evening was come* (or at six o'clock), the time when workmen were paid off, and sent home, *the lord of the vineyard says to his steward, Call the labourers* who have been working in the vineyard, *and pay them their wages, beginning from* those who were *the last* hired, and so going on *even to the first.*

8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

9 *And* having thus been ordered to present themselves, *when they* accordingly *came* foremost *who* [*were hired*] *about the eleventh hour*, and so had entered last into the vineyard, *they each* of them *received* no less than *a penny*, the master having directed they should be thus generously rewarded.

9 And when they came that *were hired*, about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

And

complacency, as a people who had for many ages adhered to the worship of the true God, and in some periods had endured great extremities out of a regard to it; and it seems natural to interpret what is said, (ver. 12.) of *bearing the burden and heat of the day*, with a reference to this, rather than to any peculiar hardship which the earlier converts among the Jews might have endured more than the believing Gentiles, many of whom met with much the same treatment on their embracing Christianity. See 1 Thess. ii. 14.

d *Whatsoever is reasonable.*] So I think the word δικαιον may be rendered, Phil. i. 7. Col. iv. 1. and 2 Pet. i. 13. and that it signifies not only what a person may legally claim, but what he might equitably expect from a person of honour and humanity.

e *They*

SECT. CXXXVIII.

Mat. XX. 10.

10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more: and they likewise received every man a penny.

And upon seeing this, *when* those who were *the first*, and had been working all the day, *came* to be paid, *they reckoned* with themselves *that they should have received* considerably *more; but they* were *also* paid the same, and only *received every one a penny.*

11 And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the good man of the house,

And when they had received [*it*], instead of being satisfied with what was promised them, *they murmured against the master of the house*[c] who had set them to work,

12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

And said, Truly these last have laboured but one hour, and thou hast made them equal in the recompence they have received *to us, who have borne the* whole *burden*, and gone through all the toil *and heat of the day* from morning to night.

13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

But he calmly *answered and said to one of them*, who spoke in the name of the rest, *Friend*, it is most apparent that *I do not* in any degree *injure thee*, or any of thy companions: *didst not thou agree with me* to labour all the day *for a penny*, and hast thou not received it?

14 Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

Take what is justly *thine, and be gone*, without pretending to dictate to me in an affair wherein thou hast no manner of concern; *for I will* do as I see fit, and *give to this last* man, who came in but an hour ago, *even as* I do *to thee*[f].

15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

And indeed what colour hast thou for a complaint? *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with* what is undoubtedly *mine own* property[g]? What if I pleased to give it to one who had done nothing at all for it? *Is thine eye evil*[h], or dost thou look on

[c] *They murmured against the master of the house*] That this was the case of the Jews, upon a general notion of the Gentiles being, according to the Christian scheme, intended to be partakers with them in the same *church-privileges*, is plain from a variety of *scriptures*. See Acts xi. 2, 3. xiii. 45—50. xvii. 5, 13. xviii. 6, 13. xxii. 21, 22. xxviii. 29. Rom. xi. 28. and 1 Thess. ii. 16.

[f] *I will give to this last even as to thee.*] Since no *murmurings* can happen among the *blessed*, this must refer to the unbelieving Jews; but as it is certain *they* will have no place in the *kingdom of heaven*, we plainly see that it would be very absurd to pretend to draw doctrinal consequences from every incidental circumstance of a *parable*.

[g] *And indeed is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?*] That the *particle* η may thus be rendered, *And indeed*, has been observed before, *note*[c], on Mat. vii. 9. Vol. VI. p. 233.—And as to what is here suggested, so many *scriptures* declare expressly that God at the great day will *render to every one according to his works*, and intimate that there shall be an exact correspondence between every man's *character* and the *reward* which (through the riches of Divine grace) shall then be bestowed, that it would be very unreasonable, from such a *circumstance* as this in the *parable*, to infer the contrary. But if any should maintain that all the favours of Divine Providence and grace must *now* be dispensed only in proportion to the wisdom and goodness of the person concerned, I apprehend they would argue directly contrary to the whole design of this *parable*, and to what daily appears to be *fact*, which therefore cannot give way to any *hypothesis*.

[h] *Is thine eye evil?*] Here is an evident reference to that *malignant aspect* which is generally the attendant of a *selfish* and *envious temper*.

[f] Peculiarly

SECT. CXXXVIII.

Mat. XX. 15.

on with an envious and malignant countenance, *because I am* so *good*, that out of compassion to these poor men I freely give them what they could not justly have claimed?

16 And *thus* said Jesus at the conclusion of this parable, You see (as I have just been telling you, Mat. xix. 30.) there are some who seemed to be *the last* in privileges and advantages, who *shall be first* in the reward and happiness that shall be given to them; *and*, on the other hand, there are many in those respects *the first*, who shall be *last*. And this is a remark peculiarly applicable to the Jewish nation[i], who will murmur at the calling of the Gentiles to equal dignities and privileges with themselves, and on that account will reject the gospel, and persecute you the preachers of it: *for* though *many are called*, and the messages of salvation are sent to vast multitudes, even to all the thousands of Israel, yet there are *but few chosen*[k]: a small remnant only will embrace the gospel so universally offered, and so be saved according to the election of grace, (Rom. xi. 5.) while the rest will be justly disowned by God, as a punishment for so obstinate and so envious a temper.

16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 16 MAY we by Divine grace appear in the happy number of those who are not only *called*, but *chosen* too! If we are *first* in privileges and opportunities, let us be careful that our improvement be proportionable; otherwise we shall be *last*, and see ourselves another day exceeded, and perhaps condemned, by those who stood in a rank much below us.

1 We are called to a course of holy *labour*, even to *work in our Lord's vineyard*, or in every station, whether public or private, to

i Peculiarly applicable to the Jewish nation.] The remark itself is far more extensive, as I intimate both in the *paraphrase* and *improvement*. But as this was a memorable instance of it, so it is plainly what Christ had immediately in his view.

k *Many are called, but few chosen.*] Grotius has a very learned and ingenious *note* on *this text*; but no genius or learning can be sufficient to prove what he seems to intend, that persons are called *the chosen of God*, merely with respect to the Divine complacency in them on account of some distinguished virtue and excellence. Compare Deut. vii. 6—8. ix. 6. John xv. 16. Acts ix. 13, 15. Rom. xi. 5, 6. and 1 John iv. 19.—To understand the expression here of *chosen and excellent servants* (as Mr. Le Clerc, Dr. Wall, and many others do) is quite to contradict the design of the *parable*. On that supposition the *master* must have said, "These last have done as much in one hour as you in many; or I chose them, because I knew they were men remarkable for their diligence."—This is the turn which the Talmudists have given to the *parable* in their insipid imitation of it, which may be seen in Dr. *Lightfoot, Hor. Heb.* on Mat. xx. 1.

to do our utmost to promote the glory of God and the happiness of mankind. Let us not, with so many calls and so many advantages, *stand all the day idle;* but let us be active and patient, and cheerfully willing to *bear all the burden and heat of the day* in so good a cause; knowing that ere long *the evening will come,* and that he who employs us saith, *Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.* (Rev. xxii. 12.) SECT. CXXXVIII. 6 12 8

Let such as have long neglected the great business of life be encouraged with this thought, that some were *called at the eleventh hour:* but let none presume on their having such a call nor strain the *parable* so far as to imagine that an *equal reward* awaits *all,* without any regard to their characters or improvements; which is most contrary to the reason of things, to the word of God, and to the great intent of that day which is *to render to every man according to his deeds.* (Rom. ii. 6.) 6

The *Gentiles* are indeed now called to equal privileges with the *Jews,* to which this circumstance of the *parable* refers: and we all see how odious a temper it was in that favourite nation to be *offended* with the *gospel* on that account, which should rather have recommended it to their more joyful acceptance. Let us be careful to avoid every degree of *envy,* whoever may be put on a level with us, or preferred to us. Let us acknowledge the sovereign right of God to *do what he will with his own,* and let not *our eye be evil, because he is good.* To prevent this, let us labour after that *unfeigned love to the brethren* which never will allow us to repine at their advancement to the greatest privileges, but will engage us to behold the favours that are shewn them with delight and satisfaction, and to rejoice in their honour and happiness as our own. So shall we exchange the basest and most uneasy *passion* of human nature for that which is of all others the noblest and the most delightful. 9 11, 12 15

SECT. CXXXIX.

Our Lord, hearing of the sickness of his friend Lazarus, and afterwards knowing that he was dead, determines to go from the country beyond Jordan to Judea, though against the persuasion of his disciples. John XI. 1—16.

JOHN XI. 1.

NOW a certain man was sick, *named* Lazarus of Bethany, the

JOHN XI. 1.

NOW while Jesus was on the other side Jordan, whither he had retired when he left Jerusalem (John x. 40, sect. cxxxiv.), *there was one* SECT. CXXXIX. John XI. 1.

SECT. CXXXIX.

one Lazarus of Bethany, which was also *the town of Mary, and Martha her sister, who was sick* of a very dangerous distemper. And, by the way, it is to be observed, that *it was* [*that*] *Mary who* afterwards at a public entertainment, in testimony of her high regard and veneration for him, *anointed the Lord with* a most precious *ointment*[a], *and wiped his feet with her hair*,

John XI. 2.

the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

3 *whose brother Lazarus was sick. The sisters therefore*, full of concern for their diseased brother, knowing where Jesus was, *sent to him, and said, Lord*, we beg that thou wouldst be pleased to favour us with a visit, whatever difficulties may lie in the way; for *behold, he whom thou* so tenderly *lovest*, even Lazarus thy friend, *is* so exceedingly *ill*, that, without thy interposition for his deliverance, nothing but death can be expected.

3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 *But when Jesus heard* [*it*], *he said, This sickness is not* designed by providence *to* end in his *death*, and final removal out of this world[b]; *but* shall serve *for* the remarkable illustration of *the glory of God*, and is suffered to prevail, chiefly with a design *that the Son of God may be glorified by it*, and his Divine mission most signally confirmed.

4 When Jesus heard *that*, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

5 *Now* it was well known that *Jesus loved Martha, and her sister* Mary, *and* this their brother *Lazarus*, with a peculiar affection, and had often visited them, and lodged at their house; and, in consequence of this, he was determined to order

5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

[a] *It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment.*] Some *commentators* have supposed that this refers to the story related by Luke, chap. vii. 37, *& seq.* (sect. lx. and have argued from thence that Mary Magdalene, whom they think to be the person there described as *a woman that was a sinner*, was the same with this *Mary the sister of Lazarus*. But it seems much more probable that John himself should mention the fact that he has here referred to; which, if he has done to all, it must be that which he relates, John xii. 3, *& seq.* (sect. cxlv.) where there can be no doubt but that the person who performed this instance of respect to Christ was *Mary the sister of Lazarus*, who was of Bethany near Jerusalem, and therefore must be different from Mary Magdalene, who was of Magdala, a town of Galilee at a considerable distance. Nor is there any ground from *scripture* to conclude that Mary Magdalene was the person who *anointed Christ* in Luke, which appears rather to be there described as the action of a woman of Naim, where Christ restored the *widow's son* to life (Luke vii. 37). Compare *note* b on Luke viii. 2, Vol. VI. p. 319.—Besides, the stories are related with such different circumstances, that it is strange they should be taken for the *same fact*; and as Luke no where tells us that the person he speaks of was named Mary, so neither have we any reason to suppose that the *same person* should *anoint him twice*.

[b] *This sickness is not to death, &c.*] Compare Mat. ix. 24, and Mark v. 39, Vol. VI. p. 381.—*Our Lord* afterwards so fully explains what he meant by this ambiguous speech, that nothing reasonable can be objected to it: but it is a remarkable instance of the candour and fidelity of the *evangelists* here, and in the fore-cited places, so exactly to record the *very words of Jesus*, though malice might so easily cavil at them.

[c] *After*

order the affair in such a manner as he knew would be most for their final advantage, though it might for a while be an occasion of greater affliction. SECT. CXXXIX. John XI. 5.

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

When therefore he had heard that he was sick, 6 *he then,* without declaring he had any thought of going to him, *abode* yet *two days* longer on the other side Jordan, *in the* same *place where he was* before. And *then after that,* that is, 7 on the third day, *he says to his disciples, Let us* now *go* back *again to Judea*[c].

7 Then after that, saith he to *his* disciples, Let us go into Judea again.

8 *His* disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee: and goest thou thither again?

The disciples say unto him, Rabbi, it is *but* just 8 *now* that *the Jews sought to stone thee* (John x. 31, sect. cxxxiv.) *and dost thou* intend so soon to *go thither again,* as if it were to tempt the danger from which thou hast so lately with such difficulty escaped?

9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in 9 *the day?* Now *if any man* take the advantage of them, and *walk in the day, he* is prepared for all events, and *does not stumble* at any obstacle which may lie in his way; *because* the sun is then above the horizon, and *he sees the light of this world.*

10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

But if any man will rather choose to *walk in the* 10 *night,* it is no wonder at all if *he stumbles* then, *because there is no light in* the air around *him.* In like manner I am desirous, as I lately told you, to do the will of my heavenly Father while the day or opportunity of life lasts (John ix. 4, sect. cxxx.) and I doubt not but I shall thereby approve myself in his sight, and secure his protection and favour.

11 These things said he: and after that, he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.

These things he said to silence their objections, 11 and to prepare their minds for what he yet concealed: *and after this,* as he perfectly knew what had passed at Bethany, though so many miles distant from it, *he says to them, Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep; but I am going* to him, *that I may awaken him;* thereby referring to his death, and to that raising him from it which he intended quickly to effect.

His

[c] *After that he says to his disciples,* &c.] From comparing Mat. xx. 17; Mark x. 32; and Luke xviii. 31, (sect. cxlii.), many *critics* infer, that what is recorded there and in the following *verses* happened during the interval of Christ's delay to go to Bethany, after he heard that Lazarus was sick: but I do not find that *Christ went to Jerusalem* now; and if he did, it seems that those events happened in his very *last journey* thither, and consequently should not be introduced *here;* especially as they break the thread of the story, out of regard to which, I think, some small *transpositions* may well be allowed in other places though none be needful here.

SECT. CXXXIX.

John XI. 12. *His disciples therefore*, not apprehending his meaning, immediately *said*, *Lord, if he sleeps* naturally and quietly, as thou seemest to intimate, *he will* probably *recover*; and there is the less reason for thy running the hazard of going thither to heal him.

12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

13 *But Jesus spake* this *concerning his death*, which for many apparent reasons he chose to represent under this gentle image[d]; *but they thought that he had spoken of* his *taking rest* as a living man does *in* a common *sleep*.

13 Howbeit, Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

14 *Then Jesus therefore*, that he might not hold them any longer in suspence, or leave them under a mistake, *said to them plainly*, *Lazarus is* 15 indeed *dead*. *And*, as I could not have permitted this to have happened in my presence, *I am glad on your account that I was not there; that you may* more confidently *believe* in me, and may find your faith confirmed by a farther remarkable display of my Divine power, in some respects exceeding any thing you have yet seen: *but let us* now *go* directly *to him* at Bethany.

14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

15 And I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there (to the intent ye may believe); nevertheless let us go unto him.

16 *Then Thomas, who was* also *called Didymus*, *said to his fellow-disciples* and brethren in the apostolic office, Since our dear Master will expose himself to so much danger among his inhuman enemies in Judea, *let us also go*, though it be only *that we may die with him*; for whatsoever he may suffer, it is infinitely better we should take our portion with him, even in death, than that we should desert such a friend in an article of the extremest danger.

16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 5, 1, 3, 14 How happy was this family of *Lazarus* in which *Christ* was so frequent a guest! how happy *Lazarus* and *his sisters*, who were so peculiarly *beloved* by him! Yet *sickness* and *death* invaded that

d For many apparent reasons he chose to represent under this gentle image.] *Our Lord* might choose the expressions of *Lazarus sleeping* partly out of *tenderness*, as being least shocking, when he spoke of so dear a friend; as *Homer*, when he represents Antiochus as reporting the *death* of Patroclus to Achilles, used the word κεῖται, *he is fallen*, rather than *he is slain*: (Iliad. lib. xviii. ver. 20.) And it may also be farther considered as an instance of *our Lord's modesty*: he does not immediately say, "*He is dead*, and I go by my almighty power to burst the bonds of the sepulchre, and to command him back to life again;" but, avoiding all parade and ostentation, he chooses the simplest and humblest expression that can be thought of.—This fine remark (which Mr. *Blackwall* makes in his *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 297) is admirably illustrated, in a great variety of particulars in the present story, by the ingenious Dr. *Lardner* in his *Vindication* of it. He has treated the subject with a candour and rectitude of heart equal to the accuracy of his critical skill, and even equal to that malignity and baseness of soul with which Woolston attacked it.

that family; and this excellent man, as it should seem, in flou- SECT. CXXXIX.
rishing circumstances (ver. 19), and perhaps too in early youth, was snatched away, on a sudden, by what appeared a very untimely stroke. The *friends* of *Christ* must *be sick, and die,* as well as others; and *no man knoweth either love, or hatred, by all that is before them* under the sun; (Eccles. ix. 1.) Let us therefore *judge nothing before the time;* (1 Cor. iv. 5.) This *sickness* and *death* of *Lazarus* was *for the glory of God:* and may all our personal 4
and domestic sufferings be so! "To this, O Lord, may our *life* be consecrated, and to this may our *death* be subservient! We shall not then feel our dying pangs in half their bitterness, when our hearts are inflamed with a zeal for thy glory, and when we see that even those pangs are promoting it."

Our Lord delayed his coming to this dear friend in his extremity; 6
and perhaps it occasioned, not only many an anxious, but many a suspicious thought, both to *Lazarus* and his sisters; yet the intent of *this delay* was both gracious and important. Let us not *limit* our Divine Master as to the time or manner of his appearance for us: let us not censure him if it be for a while put off. It is to exercise our faith and patience, and to make the mercy more signal and more welcome.

At length a resolution is formed to *go into Judea;* though but 7,8,15
a little while ago the *Jews* had assaulted him, even in a sacred place, with burning malice in their hearts, and the instruments of death in their hands. But when Providence called, *none of these things* could *move* our blessed Redeemer, *neither counted* he *his life dear unto him, that he might finish his course with joy.* (Acts xx. 24.) May we shew the like intrepidity of soul in his service! *walking in the day,* that we *may not stumble,* and taking 9, 10
all proper opportunities of performing the duties of life while the season of it lasts; and then, when *the night* of death *comes,* it will close our eyes in peaceful slumbers. The *repose* of the breathless 11
corpse, insensible of alarms, and sorrows, and cares, will be a lovely emblem of the sweeter *repose* of the *soul* in the arms of Divine love, till ere long *Christ* shall come to *awaken us out of* our *sleep* by that *general resurrection* of which *this of Lazarus* was a figure and pledge.

Let these glorious thoughts and expectations animate us to all the returns of affection, duty, and zeal. Let them teach us the temper of *Thomas* when he said, *Let us go and die with him.* "Blessed *Jesus!* how much better is it to *die with* and *for* thee, 16
who art *the resurrection and the life,* than to prolong these wretched days of absence, meanness, and affliction, by forsaking thee when thou art leading us into danger!"

SECT.

SECT. CXL.

Our Lord raises Lazarus from the dead after he had been buried four days. John XI. 17—46.

JOHN XI. 17.

sect. cxl.

THEN Jesus, according to the resolution he had declared to his disciples (ver. 7, 15), de-

John XI. 17. parted from the country beyond Jordan, where he had continued for some time, and went towards Bethany; and *when he came* near the village, he *found that* his friend Lazarus was dead, and that *he had been now four days in the tomb.*

18 *Now Bethany*, the place where Lazarus had lived, *was* very *near to Jerusalem*, being but *about fifteen furlongs off* (or somewhat less than two miles); so that he was well known in the

19 city, and had many friends there. *And many of the Jews* who dwelt there[a], when the funeral was over, *came to Martha and Mary*[b], *that they might comfort them concerning* the loss of *their* beloved *brother*[c].

20 And Jesus was no sooner come into the neighbourhood, but presently the news of his approach was brought to the afflicted family that had so long been impatiently desirous to see him. *Martha therefore, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming*, immediately *went out to meet him: but Mary*, who was mourning with her friends in private, was not as yet informed of his approach, and [*still*] *sat* weeping *in the house*[d].

21 *Then Martha*, being told where she might meet with him, and having hastened to the place, *said unto Jesus, Lord*, we have been much surprised at thy delay, and cannot but be exceedingly

JOHN XI. 17.

THEN when Jesus came, he found that he had lien in the grave four days already.

18 (Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.)

19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house.

21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord if thou

[a] *Many of the Jews*, &c.] It might be one reason why Jesus delayed his coming till the *fourth day*, that he might meet a great number of them, as, for wise purposes he determined to make this miracle very public.

[b] *Came to Martha and Mary.*] The *original* has it πρὸς τὰς περὶ Μαρθαν καὶ Μαριαν; but the learned *Revius*, in his *Notes on Valla* on this text, has produced incontestible authorities to vindicate *our version* here, and to shew that there is no need to render or paraphrase it as Beza and Wolfius would do, "That the *men* came to join with those *female friends* who had before attended the mourning sisters, and were now with them." The word Ιουδαιων, Jews, to be sure includes persons of *both sexes*.—See also *Raphel. Not. ex. Xenoph.* p. 137.

[c] *That they might comfort them*, &c.] Many ceremonies used by the ancient Jews in *mourning for the dead* and in *comforting the mourners* are collected by Dr. *Lightfoot* (in his *Hor. Hebr.* on this place); but the mention of them here would be tedious, rather than edifying.

[d] *Sat* weeping *in the house.*] She probably *sat on the ground*, which was the posture of *mourners*. Compare Job ii. 8. Ezek. viii. 14. and Mat. xxvii. 61.

thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

ingly troubled at it, that thou didst not immediately take notice of the message that we sent thee; for, surely, *if thou hadst been here, my* dear *brother had not died*, but would have been given back to thy prayers, which in so many instances have been successful even for the recovery of strangers. *But even now I know,* *that whatsoever thou shalt* think fit to *ask of God*, it shall assuredly be granted; and I am satisfied that *God will give* [*it*] *thee*, however great the favour be, if there be any method to repair the grievous loss we have sustained.

SECT. CXI.

John XI. 21.

22 But I know, that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee.

22

23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

Jesus, beholding her distress with a compassionate concern, *says to her*, Martha, do not abandon thyself to overwhelming grief; for I assure thee that *thy* beloved *brother shall rise again* from the dead.

23

24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Then *Martha*, conceiving some secret and trembling hope from these words, yet desiring some farther confirmation of it, *says to him*, Lord, *I* well *know*, and stedfastly believe, *that he shall rise again in the* general *resurrection at the last day* (compare chap. v. 29, and Luke xiv. 14.) but the distance of that leaves me still under a load of sorrow.

24

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;

Jesus then *said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life* (compare chap. v. 21, and Deut. xxx. 20.) by me the general resurrection shall be accomplished, and by me a most glorious and happy life shall be given to all my people, and be maintained even to eternal ages: *he* therefore *that believes in me, though he be dead*, yet he *shall* ere long *live* again, and his re-animated body shall be again united to that soul which in its separate state continues its dependance on my power and faithfulness; and even at present I can loose the bonds of death, and though thy brother now is holden by it, I can recall him when I please to life: *And every one that is* now *living, and believes in me, shall never die*[e]: death

25

26 And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me

26

[e] *That is living and believes in me, shall never die.*] The sense that I have given in the *paraphrase* appears to me the most consistent sense that can be made of these remarkable words, and the equivalent passages: John v. 24. and viii. 51. And a very sublime and important sense it is, perfectly agreeable to the height of sentiment and language with which Christ is said elsewhere to have *abolished death*, and to have *destroyed the devil* (2 Tim. i. 10. and Heb. ii. 14), and with which Christians are said to be *come to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the general assembly and church of the first-born*, &c. (Heb. xii. 22, 23); and to be *raised up with Christ, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* (Eph. ii. 6.) See *Vitring. Observ. Sacr.* lib. ii. cap. 7, § 9—18. To render the words before us, as Mr *Massey* would do (*Vernac. Sacra*, p. 8.) "*Whoever, while he lives, believes on me, shall not*

SECT. CXL.

death shall be so disarmed and transformed that it shall hardly deserve the name; the better part of him being immediately conveyed to immortal life and glory, and the body only sleeping a while in the dust, till I come to awaken it to everlasting vigour and joy. *Dost thou*, Martha, *believe this* to be true?

John XI. 26.

me, shall never die. Believest thou this?

27 And *she says to him, Yes, Lord, I* firmly *believe* every thing thou sayest; for I am fully persuaded *that thou art the Messiah, the Son of God, who was to come into the world*, and has been so long promised, expected, and desired; and that all power therefore must belong to thee.

27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

28 *And* Martha *having said these* [*words*], and testified her faith, Jesus inquired for her sister; and presently *she went away, and called her sister Mary* as *privately* as she could, whispering in her ear, and *saying, The Master is hard by, and calleth for thee.*

28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.

29 And *as soon as she heard* [*it*] *she immediately arose, and*, having left the company that were about her, *came* forward with the utmost eagerness *to* meet *him. Now Jesus was not yet entered into the village, but* still *continued in the place where Martha met him*, waiting there for Mary's coming.

29 As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

31 *The Jews then who were with her in the house*, attempting *to comfort her* under her sorrow, *seeing that Mary arose up hastly and went out* of doors, *followed her, saying, Surely she is going to the sepulchre* of her brother, *that she may weep there*[f], which will only aggravate and renew her sorrow; let us therefore endeavour to dissuade her from it. And thus, by their going after her, they were naturally led to be eye-witnesses of all that followed.

31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave, to weep there.

32 *Then Mary, when she came* to the place *where Jesus was, and saw him*, was so far from being afraid to avow her regards to him (compare John ix. 22, sect. cxxx), that she *fell down at his feet*, and embraced them with the greatest respect,

32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying

not die for ever, or eternally." is both obscuring and enervating their sense, and (as I have shewn elsewhere, *note*[l] on John iv. 14. Vol. VI. p. 163, and *notes*[b, c], on John viii. 51, 52. Vol. VI. p. 542, 543) is grounded on a criticism which cannot agree with the use of the phrase in question in parallel passages. Compare Mat. xxi. 19. sect. cxlix.—The opposition between *this* and the *preceding verse* plainly shews that the former refers to the *spirits* of those who were dead, who are yet spoken of as *believing in Christ*; and is, I think, no contemptible proof of their remaining in *a state of activity*: but the doctrine is so very plain in scripture as not to need the aid of such consequential arguments.

[f] *She is going to the sepulchre, that she may weep there.*] How customary this was among the ancients is particularly observed by *Elsner, Observ.* Vol. I. p. 330.

saying, unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

respect, *saying to him*, as her sister had done before, *Lord, if thou hadst been here* sooner, surely *my* dear *brother had not died*. And she was so overcome with grief that she could utter no more.

SECT. CXI.

John XI. 32.

33 When Jesus therefore, saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the Spirit, and was troubled,

Jesus therefore, when he saw her thus *weeping*, *and the Jews* also *weeping that came with her*, *groaned* with a deep concern, as feeling a strong commotion *in* his own *spirit; and* judging it proper in this instance to indulge it (though he always had every passion under the most entire command), he voluntarily *afflicted himself* by opening his mind to a set of melting and painful ideas.

33

34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see.

And looking with a tender pity on the mourning relations of his deceased friend, *he said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord*, we desire thou wouldst *come and see;* wishing to bring him to the sepulchre, in some uncertain hope of what was afterwards done.

34

35 Jesus wept.

And as they were going along, *Jesus* himself *wept*, at the remembrance of the dead, in sympathy with the living, and in compassion to the obstinate Jews, whose final impenitence he foresaw, and knew how much the guilt of it would be aggravated in consequence of their being spectators of such a miracle.

35

36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him.

The Jews therefore, seeing him in tears, *said, Behold, how he loved him*, and how his heart overflows with sorrow for his death.

36

37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

But some of them, who had a secret aversion to him, *said, Could not this man, who* is said to have *opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that this man also should not have died?* Could he not have come to cure him, or, as it is reported in some other instances, have effected it even at a distance?

37

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

Jesus therefore, understanding this invidious insinuation, and *groaning again within himself*, as in great anguish of heart, *comes to the sepulchre*. Now *it was a cave, and a* large *stone was laid upon* the mouth of *it*.

38

39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him

Jesus says to them that stood by, *Remove the stone* which stops up the entrance[s]; but *Martha, the sister of the deceased*,

39

[s] *Jesus says, remove the stone*, &c.] *Our Lord* (as Bishop Hall justly observes) could with infinite ease have commanded *the stone* to roll away of itself, without employing any to remove it; but he judiciously avoided all unnecessary pomp and parade, and mingled all the majesty of this astonishing *miracle* with the most amiable modesty and simplicity. There is no reason to imagine, as some do, that the

SECT. CXL.

John XI. 39. *ceased, says to him, Lord,* he has been dead so long, that *he now smells* in an offensive manner[h]; *for he has been* [*here*] no less than part of *four days,* this being the fourth since his interment.

40 (Compare ver. 17.) *Jesus says to her,* Why dost thou object against what I direct? *Did I not say unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God* remarkably displayed in a work of signal power and mercy?

41 *Then they took away the stone from* the mouth of the tomb *where the deceased lay.*

And when it was removed, *Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee, that thou hast* graciously *heard me* in those secret groanings of soul which I have been pouring forth in

42 thy presence: *And* indeed *I knew that thou always hearest me,* and art most ready to answer all my petitions; *but I* now *speak* [*thus,*] *because of the multitude that is standing by, that they,* comparing what they hear with what they are now to behold, *may* have increasing and more effectual engagements to *believe that thou hast sent me.*

43 *And having said these words, he cried with a loud voice,* suitable to the majestic part which he was now acting, and the dominion he had even in the empire of death itself, as well as that he might be heard by all the multitude that

44 were present, *Lazarus, come forth. And* such an almighty energy went along with his word, that immediately, according to his command, *he that was dead came forth, bound* (as the dead usually were) *about* [*his*] *feet and hands with grave-clothes,* or with several rolls and foldings of linen that were wrapt about him, but which were so far loosened by the power of Christ as to permit him to move; *and his face was* also *bound about with a napkin*[i]. And *Jesus,* on his coming

him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days.

40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?

41 Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus lift up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me.

42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by, I said *it,* that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

43 And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus

the stone lay on the top of the cave, and that the corpse was let down with cords; for then Lazarus could not, without a farther *miracle,* have ascended of himself. It is much more reasonable to believe the entrance was at the *side* of the *sepulchre.* Mr. *Maundrel* tells us (in his *Journey to Jerusalem,* p. 79) that the ruins of Lazarus's house are still shewn, and not far from thence *his sepulchre,* into which there is a descent of twenty-five steep stairs, which lead into two small rooms, in the farther of which the body is said to have been laid. But one cannot much depend on the genuineness of such antiquities. See *Sands's Travels,* p. 196.

[h] He has been dead so long that *he now smells,* &c.] The word ὀζει has the same *ambiguity* with this which I have used, and seems rather more decent than that in *our translation,* though the meaning is plainly the same.—Martha's mind seems to have been in a painful struggle, tossed with a variety of passions, which prevented a perfect consistency in her behaviour.

[i] *His face was bound about with a napkin.*] If the Jews buried as the Egyptians did, the

saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

coming forth in this confined posture, *says to them* that stood by, *Unbind him, and let him go:* for nothing more was needful to be done in a miraculous way, and he had strength enough to walk, his health and vigour being perfectly recovered with his life. SECT. CXI. John XI. 44.

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

Thus was this illustrious miracle completely and publicly accomplished: and such was the effect of it, that *many of the Jews therefore, who had come to* visit *Mary, and beheld what Jesus did,* were so affected with this marvellous instance of his power, that they *believed on him* as the Messiah. 45

46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

But some of them were so obstinate and perverse, that they *went away to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done*[k], on purpose that they might inflame them, and stir them up to take some method to prevent his growing influence among the people. 46

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us by faith continually regard *Jesus* (as his discourses and actions concur to represent him) as *the resurrection and the life;* believing on this glorious specimen here given of it, that he can, and will finally cause *all that are in the graves* to *hear his voice, and* to *come forth,* (John v. 28, 29.) A most delightful thought, which we should often apply both to ourselves and to our pious friends! Let the consideration, that they are to *arise in the resurrection at the last day,* moderate our sorrows for their removal, and forbid *our mourning as others that have no hope;* (1 Thess. iv. 13.) Were *a resurrection on earth* expected, though at the distance of several years, we should consider them only as persons absent on a long journey, and expect their return with patience and cheerfulness: but oh, how much more certain is *the resurrection of the just* than the issue of any of our journeys or expectation in life! Ver. 25 24

We often *go,* in our thoughts at least, *to the grave to weep;* but let us not forget to raise our contemplations higher, even to *Jesus,* who here expressed such tender sentiments of compassion, and *wept* when he saw the *tears* of others, though he knew he was going 31 35

the face was not covered with it, but it only went round the forehead and under the chin, so that on his returning to life he might easily see his way out of the sepulchre.

k *Went away to the Pharisees,* &c.] We have in this a most amazing instance of incorrigible hardness of heart, and a dreadful confirmation of *our Lord's* remark, *If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.* Luke xvi. 31. sect. CXXV.

SECT. CXI.

ing to *wipe them away* by restoring that friend whom they lamented.—*He afflicted himself*, and it may be proper for *us* sometimes to
Ver. do it, and to hold down our thoughts to those views of things which
33 may give us pain and regret; if that attention be so adjusted and attempered as only to produce *a sadness of the countenance* that may *improve the heart.* (Eccles. vii. 3.)

39 Let the *modesty* with which *our Lord* conducted this grand and solemn scene teach us to avoid all mean transports of self-ap-
41, 42 plause, and all fondness for ostentation and parade. Like *Jesus*, let us *in all our ways acknowledge God*, and maintain a continual dependance on his influence, to be sought by fervent *prayer*; and then we may go forth to every duty with a courageous and cheerful assurance that he will carry us honourably and comfortably
40 through it. Let us but stedfastly *believe*, and we shall *see the glory of God:* he will manifest his power for our help; and when our case appears to be remediless, then is the time for his almighty hand to save.

43, 44 Let us adore and trust in *him* who was armed with so divine a power as to be able to rescue *the prisoners of death*, and to recover
26 the trophies of the all-conquering and devouring *grave.* And if we are true *believers*, let us learn to take our part in the triumph with a joyful assurance, that though we *putrify* in the dust, and
39 *after the skin worms devour our bodies, yet in our flesh we shall* at length *see God.* (Job xix. 26.)

It was surely a happy time that succeeded all the lamentations of these affectionate mourners. With what mutual congratulations and unutterable endearments did *Lazarus* and *his sisters* behold each other! With what humble gratitude and adoration did they all prostrate themselves at the feet of their *Almighty Saviour!* But who can conceive the greater transports which shall run through the whole redeemed world at the *resurrection day*, when piety and friendship shall be perfected, and those who were dearest to each other, both in the bonds of nature and of grace, shall spring up together to an immortal undivided life! In the mean time, let us *trust our friends with him* (with whom, if we are *Christians indeed*, we have trusted our souls), believing that the separations he appoints are prudent and kind, and that even our prayers for their recovery are denied in mercy.

SECT.

SECT. CXLI.

The sanhedrim being informed of the resurrection of Lazarus, by the advice of Caiaphas, agree that Jesus should be put to death. He retires to Ephraim, and they issue an order for apprehending him. John XI. 47, *to the end.*

JOHN XI. 47.

THEN gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doth many miracles.

JOHN XI. 47.

sect. cxli. John XI. 47.

IT was before observed (at the close of the last section) that some who had been present at the resurrection of Lazarus, instead of being duly wrought upon by the miracle, went away and made an invidious report of it to the Pharisees: *the chief priests therefore and the Pharisees*, who were united in their enmity to Christ, being exceedingly alarmed at so astonishing an information, *convened the sanhedrim*, which was the great council of the Jewish nation, *and said*, *What are we doing* in this strange conjuncture of affairs? and why do we seem to be dreaming, when things are come to such a crisis? It is of absolute necessity that some effectual method should immediately be taken; *for* it is not to be denied that, by some means or other, *this man*, whom we have been so solicitous to suppress, *does many* of the most surprising *miracles* that were ever seen or heard of: And *if we suffer him* [*to go on*] *thus* uncontrouled, *all* the populace *will believe on him* as the promised Messiah, and will acknowledge him as the king of Israel; *and* what can we expect will be the consequence of this, but that the power of *the Romans*, so vastly superior to ours, will be armed against us, and their legions *will come and take away both our place and nation*; they will destroy Jerusalem, and this sacred temple where we are now assembled, and will extirpate all the people who are committed to our guardianship and care.

48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

48

49 And one of them *named* Caiaphas, being the high-priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all.

And, while some of the council seemed apprehensive of the danger of attempting any thing against Jesus, *one of them*, [*even*] *Caiaphas*, *who*, among the many sudden revolutions which happened in the government about that time, *was high-priest that year* in which Christ was crucified[a], *said to them*, while they were thus deliberating,

49

[a] *Was high-priest that year.*] It is well known that the *high-priesthood* among the Jews was not *annual*; but the many revolutions about that time might justify such

SECT. CXLI.

John XI. 50.

berating, *You* seem to *know nothing at all* of what the present urgency of affairs requires, or you would easily find out a remedy in the death of this Jesus, who occasions such an alarm: *Nor* is this to be scrupled, because he does not appear to have committed any crime which is made capital by our law; for *do you* not *consider* that the extreme danger of a state will justify such extraordinary steps as are necessary for its preservation; and *that it is* undoubtedly much *better for us, that one* innocent *man should die for the* security of the *people, than that the whole nation* he belongs to *should perish* by our scrupling to take away his life?

50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

51 *Now this*, by the way, was a very remarkable saying; and it is to be observed, that *he spake it not* merely *of himself, but being high-priest that year*, and so a person of the greatest dignity and authority, he was moved by a secret impulse from God to utter these words, which might be esteemed as an oracle, and were capable of a much higher sense than he apprehended; and by them *he* in effect *prophesied*[b] *that Jesus should shortly die for the* security, redemption, and happiness of the Jewish *nation: And* indeed, *not for the* Jewish *nation alone, but* for all the nations of the earth, even *that he also might gather together into one* glorious and happy society all *the* chosen *children of God that are dispersed abroad* in the most distant places and ages, among the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

51 And this spake he not of himself; but being high-priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation:

52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

53 *From that* very *day, therefore*, the members of the sanhedrim in general (though some particular persons were averse to their proceedings), having thus resolved upon the death of Jesus, sought for an opportunity to execute the malicious purpose *they* had formed, and *united their counsels, that they might* find out some convenient method to *slay him*.

53 Then from that day forth they took council together for to put him to death.

For

such a manner of speaking, which signifies no more than *in those days*, or *at that time*. (Compare Deut. xxvi. 3. Josh. xx. 6. Ezek. xxxviii. 8. and Mal. iii. 4.) See Dr. *Lardner's Credibility*, Part i. Vol. II. p. 878, 879.

[b] *Being high-priest that year, he prophesied.*] The *Jewish high-priests* had in former ages been often under the inspiration of a *prophetic spirit*: there was therefore some peculiar congruity in putting *this oracle* into his mouth, and the dignity of *his office* would add some peculiar weight and regard to what he said.—It is a strange fancy of Dr. Lightfoot, that Caiaphas knew Jesus to be *the Messiah*, and that the *sanhedrim* founded their apprehension of danger from the Romans, in consequence of the regard shewn to him, on a ridiculous interpretation of Isa. x. *ult.* and xi. 1. whence they inferred that the *destruction of the temple* should quickly succeed the *coming of the Messiah*. See his *Hor. Heb.* on John xi. 48, 51.

SECT. CXLI.

John XI. 54.

54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence into a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

For this reason Jesus, who knew the secret resolution they had formed to take away his life, *walked no more openly among the Jews* in those parts till the appointed hour for his suffering was come; *but*, instead of visiting Jerusalem, he *went away from thence*, even from Bethany where he now was, *into the country near the wilderness* of Judea, *to a* little *city called Ephraim*[c], which lay not far from Bethel on the confines of the tribe of Benjamin; *and there he continued* a while *with* a few of *his* select *disciples*, and afterwards took a little journey eastward, towards the banks of the river Jordan[d], from whence he had lately come to Bethany on account of Lazarus's death.

55 And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover to purify themselves.

55 *And* soon after this *the Jewish passover drew near; and many went up from* all parts of *the country to Jerusalem*, some little time *before the passover, that they might purify themselves* by some preparatory sacrifices[e], in order to be ready for the celebration of that solemn festival.

56 Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?

(Compare 2 Chron. xxx. 17.) *Then*, as the people came together, *they* diligently *sought for Jesus* there, some of them being desirous to see and hear him, and others wanting to discover him to his avowed enemies the Pharisees: and as it could not but be generally known that the surprising miracle which he had lately wrought had very much inflamed the rage and envy of his persecutors, they were suspicious whether he would venture to appear in public, *and said one to another, as they stood in the temple, What think ye* of his coming to the passover? Do you suppose *that*, after this alarm, *he will not* have the courage to *come to the feast? But both the chief priests and the Pharisees*, concluding that he would not fail to come according to his usual custom, no longer dissembled their malice, but published a mandate, by which they *had given* an express *command, that if any one knew where he was, he should* immediately *declare* [*it*] to them,

57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that if any man knew where he were, he should shew

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e *To a city called Ephraim.*] This city (which is mentioned with Bethel, 2 Chron. xiii. 19.) is by some called Ephrem, and is generally supposed to have lain in the north-east part of the lot of Benjamin. See *Reland's Palestin.* p. 376, and compare *note* a on Luke xiii. 23, p. 15.

d Took a little journey eastward, &c.] This we have reason to suppose, or Jericho would not have lain in his way to Jerusalem, which yet we find that *Jesus passed through* in his return. See Luke xix. 1, sect. cxliii.

e *That they might purify themselves* by some preparatory sacrifices.] Dr. *Lightfoot* (in his *Hor. Heb.* on this place) has shewn, that as a variety of circumstances might happen to multitudes which would require *purification*, so some sort of *cleansing* required no less than *seven days*.

SECT. CXLI. them, *that they might apprehend* and bring *him* to his trial, as a disturber of the public peace, and a person dangerous to the state. shew *it*, that they might take him.

John XI. 57.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 47 WHERE shall we find such restless, such causeless, such incorrigible malice, as was in the hearts of these *rulers* against our blessed *Saviour?* What but Divine grace can reclaim men, when to have heard of the *resurrection of Lazarus* from their own friends and confidants, who had just been eye-witnesses of it, instead of conquering their hearts, served only to inflame their murderous rage!

48—50 This is an instance where we evidently *see the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there,* (Eccles. iii. 16.) The *high-priest* lays down a most dangerous, though plausible, maxim, which is in effect no other than this, "That the *murder of* an innocent person by forms of law" (which, as a *noble sufferer* observed, is surely the worst kind of murder), "nay, even of a person who by miracles demonstrated that he was an ambassador from God, was to be chosen, rather than by protecting and obeying him, to give umbrage to an earthly power, which seemed superior to their own." When will the *politicians* of this earth learn to *trust God* in his own ways, rather than to trust themselves, and their own wisdom, in violation of all the rules of truth, honour, and conscience? Till then, like this foolish *ruler,* they will be *caught in their own craftiness;* and it is more than possible that they may, in many instances, hasten the very distress they are contriving to avoid. For this was here the event: the *Romans* (called therefore *the people of Messiah the Prince,* Dan. ix. 26.) were sent as executioners of the Divine vengeance, and the *Jews* were given up to a spirit of discord and madness, the terrible effects of which were such as cannot be read without horror, till *their place and nation were taken away;* nor could even the *Roman general* forbear declaring that the *hand of God* was apparent in their destruction.

51, 52 Let us attend to this *Divine oracle* which God saw fit to put into the mouth of so wicked a man. *Jesus* has actually *died for the people, even for all the children of God that are scattered abroad.* His death is substituted instead of theirs; and by it they are *redeemed* and delivered, and shall ere long be *incorporated together,* and all the happy colony be raised to an abode of eternal glory. Blessed harvest, which springs up from redeeming blood! Heroic love of the dear Redeemer, which at the proper time brought him

him to *Jerusalem*, where he knew that *evil was determined against him!* Let us follow him, in a courageous adherence to God and our duty, in the midst of danger and opposition; and not wonder if we are set up as the marks of infamy and reproach, when we see *Jesus* marked out by a *public mandate*, as if he had been a robber or a murderer; and find so numerous and grand a *court of judicature* requiring their subjects to *seize* this most generous Friend of the whole world as the grand enemy of God and his country. SECT. CXLII. Ver. 56, 57

SECT. CXLII.

Christ, setting out on his last journey to Jerusalem, prophesies of his sufferings there; rebukes the ambition of James and John; and renews his exhortations to humility. Mat. XX. 17—28. Mark X. 32—46. Luke XVIII. 31—34.

MARK X. 32.

AND they were in the way going up to Jerusalem: and Jesus went before them; and they were amazed, and as they followed they were afraid. And he took again [LUKE, unto him] the twelve [disciples apart in the way,] and began to tell them what things should happen unto him; [and said unto them,] [MAT. XX. 17.—LUKE XVIII. 31.—]

MARK X. 32.

AT length our Lord departed from the place of his retreat, and though he knew the resolution that his enemies had formed against him, yet he set out with his disciples, and (taking Jericho in his road) was determined to make his appearance in the temple at the approaching passover: *and as*, in pursuance of this design, *they were in the way going up to Jerusalem, Jesus*, to shew his readiness to meet sufferings and death in such a cause *went before them; and they were* exceedingly *amazed* at the spirit and ardour which he discovered in so dangerous an expedition; *and as they followed* him *they were afraid*, both for themselves and him. *And*, while their hearts were thus impressed, *he took the twelve disciples again apart to himself*, into a convenient retirement which they met with *by the way, and began* particularly *to tell them what things should befall him* in that important journey, that he might thus prepare them for the sufferings he should undergo, and that the accomplishment of his predictions might be some confirmation to their faith during a series of events which he knew would so severely try it. *And he said to them*, SECT. CXLII. Mark X. 32.

33 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, [LUKE, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished:] and the Son of man shall be [betrayed

Behold, and observe what I say; *We are* now *going up to Jerusalem, and* it is the last journey of this kind we shall ever take; for now *all things which are written by the* ancient *prophets, concerning* the sufferings of *the Son of man, shall be exactly fulfilled; and the Son of man shall be betrayed* 33

SECT. CXLII.

betrayed by one of his own company, who has professed the greatest duty and affection to him, [*and*] shall be ungratefully *delivered to the chief priests and the scribes*[a], particularly to those who constitute the sanhedrim, and who have already published so severe an edict against him (John xi. 57, sect. cxli.); *and*, when they have him thus in their power, *they shall* with great formality *condemn him to death*, as a public enemy and disturber: *and*, as they have not now the power of capital executions in their own hands, they *shall deliver him* up *to the Gentiles*, even to the Roman governor and his soldiers; *and they*, instigated by the malice of the Jews, and utterly ignorant of the dignity and glory of his person, *shall mock and spitefully entreat him* in the most contumelious and reproachful manner, *and* shall cruelly *scourge him*, *and* carry their rude outrage to such a height, that they shall even *spit upon him*; *and*, when this scene of mockery is over, they *shall put him to* a most ignominious and painful *death*; *and*, as if he was a common slave, shall even *crucify him*[b], and leave him to expire in the gradual agonies of the cross: *and* yet all their malice shall not be able to triumph over him; for *on the third day he shall rise again*, victorious over the powers of darkness, and take possession of that glorious and universal kingdom which the prophets assign to the Messiah. (Compare Mat. xvi. 21, sect. lxxxix. and Mat. xvii. 22, sect. xcii.)

Mark X. 33.

34

Luke XVIII. 34

And, plain as this declaration was, their prejudices were so great, that *they did not understand any of these things* thoroughly, being at a loss to reconcile his being slain with the possession of that kingdom which he was to inherit: *and*

trayed *and*] delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes: and they shall condemn him to death, [MAT. XX. 18. LUKE XVIII. —31.]

34 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles; and they shall mock [LUKE, and spitefully entreat] him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him, [and crucify *him:*] and the third day he shall rise again. [MAT. XX. 19. LUKE XVIII. 32, 33.

LUKE XVIII. 34. And they understood none of these things: and

[a] *Shall be betrayed and delivered*, &c.] The word παραδοθησεται is the same both in Matthew and Mark; but plainly includes both his being *treacherously discovered* by Judas and *given up* into the hands of his enemies. I have therefore retained the different words by which *our translators* render it, in the one place and the other.

[b] *They shall—scourge him, and spit upon him,—and crucify him.*] This prediction is a remarkable proof of the *prophetic Spirit* which dwelt in Christ; for, humanly speaking, it was much more probable that he should have been *privately assassinated* or *stoned*, (as was before attempted) by some zealous transport of popular fury, than that he should have been thus solemnly condemned, and delivered up to *crucifixion*; a Roman punishment with which we do not find he had ever been threatened. Indeed when the Jews condemned him for *blasphemy*, for which the punishment appointed in the law was *stoning*, and Pilate at last gave them a general permission to *take him and judge him according to their own law* (Mat. xxvi. 65, 66. John xviii. 31. and xix. 7.) it is wonderful they did not choose to *stone him*: but *all this was done that the scriptures might be fulfilled.* (Compare Mat. xxvi. 56. and John xix. 36.)

and this [saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

and this matter was hid from them to so great a degree *that*, after all our Lord had said, *they knew not the meaning of the things which were spoken.* (Compare Luke ix. 44, 45, Vol. VI. p. 483.)

SECT. CXLII.

Mat. XX. 20.

MAT. XX. 20. Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children, with her sons [James and John,] worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him, [saying, Master, we would that thou should do for us whatsoever we shall desire.] [MARK X. 35.]

Nevertheless they apprehended thus much, that whatever difficulties lay in the way, they should certainly end in his triumph and glory. And upon this presumption *then the mother of Zebedee's children came* at their instigation *to him, with her sons James and John*, who were peculiar favourites of our Lord; and they all three fell down at his feet, *worshipping* [*him*] in a most respectful manner, *and desiring a certain* [*favour*] *of him* with great importunity, weakly *saying*, *Master*, *we would* earnestly beg, *that thou shouldest* give us a general promise to *do for us whatsoever we shall request* of thee; for it would be a very great grief to us if we should not succeed in the important petition we have to present.

MARK X. 36. And he said [unto her, *and*] unto them, [What wilt thou! *or*] What would ye that I should do for you? [MAT. XX. 21.]

Mark X. 36.

And he said to her [*and*] *to them*, You cannot expect that, whatsoever kindness I have for you, I should at all adventures enter myself into so rash an engagement; tell me therefore particularly, *What wouldest thou* have? [*or*] *What would you* so earnestly desire *that I should do for you*, if I was fully disposed to grant your request?

37 [She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons,] *and* they said——Grant unto us, that we may sit, the one on thy right-hand, and the other on thy left-hand, in thy [kingdom *and*] glory. [MAT. XX.—21.]

37

She says unto him, I entreat thee to *grant that these my two* dear *sons*, to whom thou hast shewn so much regard, and who are so zealous for thy cause and interest, may be preferred to stations of the highest dignity, trust, and profit; [*and*] *they* joined with her in the same request, and *said*, *Grant us*, *that* when thou art established *in thy glorious kingdom*, which, as we apprehend, will shortly be erected in the world, *we may* not only have a place there, but may be fixed near thy throne, and *sit* in distinguished honour and authority, *the one at thy right-hand, and the other at thy left*, as thy chief ministers of state[c].

MAT. XX. 22. But Jesus

But Jesus said to them in reply, Alas! you are under

Mat. XX. 23.

[c] *We may sit, the one at thy right-hand, and the other at thy left.*] There may perhaps be *an allusion* in these words to a circumstance which the Talmudical writers relate concerning the *sanhedrim*: that there were *two officers* of peculiar distinction, who sat on each side of the *nasi*, or *president of the court*; the one called Ab Beth Din, or *the father of the justiciary*, who sat *on the right-hand* of the president; the other Chacham, or *the sage*, who sat *on the left*. See, among many other writers on this head, *Whits. Miscell. Sacr.* Vol. I. lib. ii. *Dissert.* 3, § 46, 47.

SECT. CXIII.

under the force of such carnal prejudices and mistaken views, that *you know not what you ask*, or you would be ashamed of so unseasonable a petition. This is not a time to think of temporal grandeur and authority; but it is much more proper that I should ask you, and that you should put the question to yourselves, *Are you able to drink of the* bitter *cup of which I am* now *about to drink* so deep[d], *and to be baptized with the baptism*, and plunged into that sea of sufferings *with which I am* shortly [*to be*] *baptized*, and, as it were, overwhelmed for a time? *And they say to him*, with a self-confident assurance, Yes, Lord, we doubt not but that for thy sake *we are able* to undergo all this.

Mat. XX. 22.

Jesus answered and said [unto them,] Ye know not what ye ask: Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? [And] they say unto him, We are able. [MARK X. 38, 39.—]

23 *And Jesus says unto them, You shall indeed* both of you *drink of* this *my cup of which I* am to *drink, and be baptized with the baptism* of extreme sufferings *with which I am* to be *baptized*[e]; for you shall endure great extremities for the sake of my gospel, and hazard your lives in its defence: *but* as to what you have now desired, *to sit on my right-hand, and on my left*, in my kingdom of glory, this *is not* a privilege which is *mine to give* by partial friendship, or to the first and most importunate asker; nor can I dispose of it to any *but* [*to those*] *for whom it is prepared by my Father*, who has appointed that the exaltation and happiness of the other world shall be proportioned to the degrees of piety and holiness which are attained in this.

23 And [Jesus] saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup [that I drink of,] and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right-hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father. [MARK X.—39, 40.]

24 *And when the ten* other apostles *heard* [*of it,*] and were acquainted with this motion which the sons of Zebedee had made, *they began to be much displeased* that they should aspire to a superiority to

24 And when the ten heard *it*, they [began to be much displeased, *and*] were moved

d *To drink of the cup*, &c.] It was customary among the ancients to assign to each guest at a feast a particular *cup*, as well as *dish*; and by the kind and quantity of the liquor contained in it, the respect of the entertainer was expressed. Hence *cup* came in general to signify a *portion assigned* (Psal. xvi. 5, xxiii. 5), whether of *pleasure* or *sorrow*; and many instances occur in which it refers to the latter. Compare Psal. xi. 6; lxxiii. 10; Isa. li. 17, 22; Jer. xxv. 15, 17; Zech. xii. 2; John xviii. 11; and Mat. xxvi. 39, 42.

e *You shall indeed drink of my cup*, &c.] Accordingly it is observable that this James was the *first* of all the *apostles* who suffered *martyrdom* for Christ: (Acts xii. 2.) And John was *scourged* by the Jews (Acts. v. 40; and afterwards *banished* by Domitian into the Isle of Patmos, where he speaks of himself as *a companion of Christ's tribulation*: (Rev. i. 9.) Not to mention *Tertullian's* tradition, that at Rome he was plunged into *boiling oil*; by which it is said, instead of being destroyed, he was sensibly refreshed (*Tertull. Præscript.* cap. 36): nor what the pretended Prochorus says of the attempt made by some heretics to *poison* him; which is generally referred to in the *pictures* of this apostle where the *venom* is ridiculously represented as coming out of *the cup* in the form of a *serpent*, to signify that the poison did not take effect.

f *The*

SECT. CXLII.

Mat. XX. 24.

moved with indignation against the two brethren] James and John.] [MARK X. 41.

to which each of them imagined he had himself an equal claim; [*and*] as they *were moved with indignation against the two brethren, James and John*, they were going to expostulate the matter with some severity.

25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said [unto them,] Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them; and [their great ones] exercise authority upon them.—[MARK X. 42.]

But, to prevent the evil consequences which might arise from such an ill-judged debate, and to root out that envy and ambition which prevailed among them, *Jesus called them* all *to him, and said unto them, You* well *know that the princes of the heathen* nations[f] *lord it over them* in a very imperious manner; *and their great men*, in stations of subordinate government, imitate their tyrannical masters, and *exercise* an arbitrary *authority upon them* that are more immediately subject to their command; and that ambition, which is so natural to the depraved heart of man, engages them eagerly to pursue such distinguished stations which may give them an opportunity to gratify it. 25

26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. [MARK X. 43.]

But my kingdom is of another nature, and *it shall not be so among you*; for, instead of appointing any one among you as the chief who should govern the rest[g], I tell you plainly, that you are to look on each other as brethren and equals, or rather, each to esteem others as worthier of regard than himself: indulge not therefore an ambitious temper, *but whosoever would* indeed *be great among you, let him*, instead of aiming at power and authority, choose to *be your minister*, and attend on the rest with all the humblest offices of condescension and love. 26

27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, [*yea*, the servant of all.] MARK X. 44.]

And whosoever would be chief among you, or first in my esteem, and in future honour and happiness, *let him be* ready to behave himself on all occasions as *your servant*; [*yea*], let him be *the servant*, not only of your little 27

[f] *The princes of the heathen* nations.] Mark expresses it by οι δοκουντες αρχειν των εθνων, which we render, *they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles*; but this (with *Gataker, Cinn.* lib. i. cap. 3) I take to be a *pleonasm*, and think it should be translated, *they who rule over the Gentiles*; and so it coincides with the clause inserted from Matthew. (Compare 1 Cor. xi. 16; xii. 23; xiv. 37; and Phil. iii. 4, *Gr.*) Instances are produced of the like use of the phrase in the best Greek authors by Mr. Blackwall, in his *Sacred Classics*, Vol. I. p. 74, to which may be added, της εξουσιας αειχιαν, for αδικιαν, *Polyb.* lib. i. cap. 5, and των εν υπεροχη εξουσιων, *Epictet. Enchirid.* cap. 30, § 11.

[g] Instead of appointing any one among you as the chief, &c.] As the request of these *two brethren* plainly shewed that they did not understand *our Lord's* words to Peter (Mat. xvi. 18, 19, sect. lxxxviii.) as designed to invest him with any *authority* over the rest of his brethren, so the answer which Christ here gives them, far from intimating any thing of that kind, concludes as strongly against any such *authority* as a *negative argument* can be supposed to do, and seems abundantly to justify the turn given in the *paraphrase*.

SECT. cxlii. little fraternity, but *of all* that are about him [h]; with all humility submitting to the meanest services, by which he may promote the spiritual interest and benefit of others.

Mat. XX. 27.

Mark X. 45. And wonder not that this should be required of you, when you consider how great an example you have of this temper in him who is so far your superior; *for even the Son of man* himself, though a person of such illustrious dignity, and constituted to so glorious and lasting a kingdom, *came not to be waited upon, but to serve* others; and was not sent into the world to exercise a temporal dominion, and in a lordly way to rule over men, but to take upon him the form of a servant, and not only to labour, but to die for their good, *and to give his* own *life* as *a ransom for many* who had forfeited theirs to the justice of an offended God. Think not, therefore, that the disciples of such a self-denying Master are to dream of secular power, dominion, and grandeur; but rather study to mortify these very unbecoming desires after it.

MARK X. 45. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. [MAT. XX. 28.]

46 *And,* quickly after this, *they came to Jericho,* where two blind men were cured by Christ, which was soon after followed with the remarkable conversion of Zaccheus, as will be seen in the next section.

46—And they came to Jericho.—

IMPROVEMENT.

Mark X. 33,34 ASTONISHING grace and compassion of the *Son of God* in going up to *Jerusalem* at this passover, when he so circumstantially knew all the things which were to befall him there! not only that he should be *put to death,* but *in what manner* he should suffer; and what cruelty and what scorn should introduce the last scene of his agonies! Yet, with so sad a prospect in his eye, he marched on with distinguished alacrity, *leading the company,*

32 as if he longed to encounter what they could not bear to see, or even to hear of. Glorious *Captain of our salvation,* give us the like alacrity in all the sufferings we are called to bear for thee!

35--37 Who would not grieve to see these good *apostles* still so much possessed

h *The servant of all*] There is a *gradation* here not commonly observed. The word διακονος in the former verse, which, for want of a better word, we render *minister,* is a name which might be given to any who occasionally attended others, or was statedly employed to render them any particular kind of service; but δουλος, *servant,* signifies one whose whole business it is to serve, and who is indeed the property of another. The words, *of all,* do likewise increase the *gradation.*

possessed with the spirit of this world, and still dreaming of *preferment* in a *temporal kingdom?* Who would not especially lament it, that his most intimate friends, *James*, and *John* the beloved disciple, should be the persons who should come to him with this strange request? Justly did *our Lord* answer them, *You know not what you ask.* And may not the same answer often be made to *us?* When therefore he denies us the *great things* that we are seeking for ourselves, let us be satisfied with the *denial* he sees fit to give us; believing that it is wisdom and love, and not unkindness, that produces it. SECT. CXLII. 38—

Let us often ask ourselves, *Can* we *share the sufferings* which *our Lord* endured? If we do not desire to do it so far as he shall appoint, we are not worthy to be called *his disciples.* Let us then *gird up the loins of our minds*, and wait our Master's signal to go forth to any suffering or service that he shall require; ever ready to make ourselves *the servants of all*, and therein to imitate the humility of the *Son of man*, who *came not to be ministered unto, but to minister:* yet, after all we can do or bear for him, let our trust still be in the merits of his righteousness and blood who *gave his life a ransom for many.* So shall we be fitted for those distinguished *honours* in the heavenly world, in comparison with which thrones and sceptres on earth are but empty pageants and childish toys. —38 44, 45

SECT. CXLIII.

Our Lord, passing through Jericho in his way to Jerusalem, cures two blind men as he came out from thence, and converts Zaccheus the publican. Mat. XX. 29, *to the end.* Mark X.—46, *to the end.* Luke XVIII. 35, *to the end;* XIX. 1—10.

MARK X. 46.

AND Jesus, being come to Jericho, proceeded on his journey towards Jerusalem; and being observed by many as he was passing through the city, they were all ready to run after him: *and* accordingly, *as he went out of Jericho with his disciples* in his train, *a great multitude* of other people *followed him.* SECT. CXLIII. Mark X. 46.

And behold, an occasion offered for a remarkable display of his power and grace at his departure thence; for *it came to pass; that* Providence so ordered it, *as he was* yet *nigh unto Jericho*[a], that Mat. XX. 30.

MARK X—46.— AND as he went out of Jericho with his disciples, [a great multitude followed him.] [MAT. XX. 29.]

MAT. XX. 30.— And behold, [LUKE, it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho,] Two blind

[a] *As he was* yet *nigh unto Jericho.*] In *our translation* it is rendered, *as he was come nigh unto Jericho;* but the *original*, ἐν τῷ ἐγγίζειν, only signifies, *when*, or *while he was*

SECT. cxliii. that *Two blind men sat begging by the way-side*, as beggars used to do in places that are much frequented; [*the one*] of whom was well known by the name of *Bartimeus*, that is, *the son of Timeus*[b]: *And hearing the* noise of a great *multitude passing by, he*, together with his companion, *asked what that* unusual concourse of people *meant*, and how it was occasioned. *And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth*, that celebrated Prophet who had performed so many miracles, *was coming by*, and a vast number of the people of the town were with him. *And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth*, as he had frequently been told what remarkable cures of this kind he had performed in other places, he could not but look upon it as a happy circumstance that he *was* now *passing by* the very place where he sat; and immediately *he began to cry out* with a loud voice, *and* with great eagerness to *say*, *Jesus, thou Son of David*, thou great and glorious Messiah, pity my sad condition, and *have mercy on me!* [*yea, they both*] *cried out, saying* in the same manner, and with one voice, *Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou* illustrious *Son of David*, and exert thy almighty power to deliver us from this deplorable darkness and distress!

Mat. XX. 30. Luke XVIII. 36. 37. Mark X. 47.

And some of *the multitude who went before* Jesus, *rebuked them* for their making such a clamour; *and* as the voice of Bartimeus distinguished itself on this occasion, *many* particularly *charged him that he should be silent*, and not be so importunate and troublesome: *but they*, knowing that if such an opportunity as this was lost it might never return, regarded nothing but the success of their petition, and therefore *cried out a great deal the more* earnestly, *saying* as before, *Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David!* and

Mat. XX. 31.

blind men, [*the one* Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway-side, begging.] [MARK X.—46. LUKE XVIII. 35.]

LUKE XVIII. 36. And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

37 And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

MARK X. 47. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth [passed by,] he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me: [*yea, they both* cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.] [MAT. XX.—30. LUKE XVIII. 38.

MAT. XX. 31. And the multitude [LUKE, which went before] rebuked them; and many charged him that he should hold his peace; but they cried the more [a great deal], saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David, [Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.] [MARK

was near it: compare Luke xix. 29;—to which may be added [in confirmation of the justice of this remark, which has been called in question by a writer of great eminence in the learned world], Luke x. 9; xv. 1; xviii. 40; Rom. xiii. 12; and the *Septuagint version* of Isa. l. 8; Jer. xxiii. 23.—And it is necessary to understand it thus, in order to reconcile Luke's account of this miracle with that of Matthew and Mark, who both expressly say it was performed *as he departed* or *went out of Jericho*. Some have indeed fancied that he restored sight to *one blind man* as he *entered in*, and to *another* as he *came out* (see *Lightfoot's Harmony*, § lxix.); but this is improbable, especially considering how the multitude *rebuked* Bartimeus for his importunity, which surely they would never have done if such a cure as this had but just now been wrought at the other end of the same town.

b *The son of Timeus.*] It is very probable Timeus might have been a person of some note in that neighbourhood, whose *son*, by a complication of calamities, fell both into *poverty* and *blindness*.

c *That*

[MARK X. 48. LUKE XVIII. 39.] and Bartimeus especially repeated it again and again, saying, *Thou Son of David, have mercy on me*, and help me! SECT. CXLIII.

MARK X. 49. And Jesus stood still, and commanded [them] to be called, [LUKE, *and* brought unto him:] and they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee. [MAT. XX. 32. LUKE XVIII. 40.—] *And Jesus*, as he was advancing forwards in his way, observed how earnestly they cried; and as they still repeated their request, he graciously *stood still, and ordered them* both *to be called* [*and*] *brought to him*, that they might tell him what it was they so earnestly desired. *And* upon this the people had their expectations raised, and as they now concluded that they should see him work a miracle, *they* ran immediately to *call the blind man* and his companion, *saying to him*, as also to the other, *Be of good courage*, and *rise* up, for *he calleth thee* to him; and you may therefore hope that he intends to grant your request. Mark X. 49.

50 And he casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. *And* Bartimeus joyfully received the message, and *throwing aside his* upper *garment*, that it might not hinder him a moment, *he arose, and came to Jesus* with all possible haste and eagerness; the other blind man also following as fast as he could. 50

51 And [LUKE, when he was come near,] Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight; [They say, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. [MAT. XX.—32, 33. LUKE XVIII.—40, 41.] *And when he was come near, Jesus*, to try his faith, and to encourage his dependance on his power and goodness, *answered and said unto him*, What is the mercy you so earnestly entreat? or *what dost thou desire I should do for thee? And the blind man said unto him, Rabboni*, that is, my Master and my Lord, the favour which I beg is obvious from the circumstance in which thou seest me, even *that I may* be so happy as to *recover my sight*[c], the loss of which I cannot but lament as a great calamity to me, from which I know that thou art able to deliver me. The other likewise by this time came up, making the same request; and *they* both joined to *say, Lord*, we beseech thee, *that our eyes might be opened.* 51

MAT. XX. 34.—So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes; [LUKE, and said unto him, Receive thy sight,] *and* go thy way; thy faith hath made *Then Jesus had compassion on them* both, *and touched their eyes; and*, as a testimony of his approbation of that eminent degree of faith which they had each of them expressed, and Bartimeus in particular in the strongest terms, he *said to him* and his companion, Be it unto thee as thou hast desired; *receive thy sight*, [*and*] *go thy way; thy* Mat. XX. 34

[c] *That I may recover my sight.*] This the word ἀναβλέψω exactly signifies, and seems to import that he was not *born blind*, but lost his sight by some disease or accident, which made him so much the more sensible of the calamity. Yet I acknowledge it appears from John ix. 11, 18. that the word is sometimes used in a greater latitude.

SECT. CXLIII.

thy faith has saved thee from the sad condition thou wast in; and if thou continuest to exercise it in a reliance upon me, thy eternal salvation and happiness will be secure.

Mat. XX. 34.

made thee whole.] [MARK X. 52. LUKE XVIII. 42.]

Luke XVIII. 43 *And immediately their eyes* were opened, and *received sight*, so that they now could see distinctly; *and*, with a grateful sense of their deliverance, *they* joined the company, and *followed Jesus in the way* to Jerusalem, *glorifying God* for this amazing instance of his goodness to them: *and all the people* likewise, *when they saw* [*it*], *gave praise unto God*, who in remembrance of his mercy had sent them so great a Prophet, to appear and act among them under the character of the Son of David.

LUKE XVIII. 43. And immediately [their eyes received sight, and they] followed [MARK, Jesus in the way,] glorifying God: and all the people when they saw *it*, gave praise unto God. [MAT. XX. —34. MARK X.—52.]

Luke XIX. 1. And presently the news of this surprising miracle was spread abroad; *and* [*Jesus*] *having entered* (as was said before) into the city, and having *passed through Jericho*, a vast number of people had followed him from thence; and this new instance he had given of his miraculous power increased his fame through all the neighbourhood, and drew the multitude as he passed along in crowds about him.

LUKE XIX. 1. And *Jesus* entered and passed through Jericho.

2 *And* as he thus proceeded on his journey, *behold*, another most remarkable occurrence happened, in which the efficacy of his grace was signally displayed; for [*there was*] *a man* in that country *whose name was Zaccheus, who was the chief among the publicans*, or head-collector of the customs in those parts; *and*, having heaped up abundance of wealth by his gainful employ-

2 And, behold, *there was* a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

3 ment, *he was* very *rich*. *And* the great things which he had heard of Jesus made such a powerful impression on his mind, that when he was informed that he was coming by that way, *he* diligently *sought* an opportunity *to see* this celebrated *Jesus, what sort of a person he was; but he could not* compass his design *because of the crowd* about him; *for he* himself *was* very *little of sta-*

3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was, and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

4 *ture*. *And running* therefore *before* the rest of the company, without regarding what they might think or say of him, *he got up into a sycamore-tree, that he might see him* there distinctly; *for* he perceived *he was to pass that way*, and the tree stood so near the road that he must go

4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore-tree to see him; for he was to pass that way.

5 close by it. *And Jesus, when he came to the place* where he was, *looked up, and saw him; and* knowing his disposition, character and circumstances, he immediately *said to him, Zaccheus,*

5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste,

haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house.

cheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I design thee a visit, and *must abide* for a while *at thine house;* and, fully satisfied that I shall be a welcome Guest, I take the liberty to invite myself thither. *And* Zaccheus was so overjoyed that Jesus should distinguish him in such a manner, that *he came down with* all the *speed* he could, *and gladly entertained him* at his house, thinking himself highly honoured by the presence of so excellent a Person.

SECT. cxliii.

Luke XIX. 5.

6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

6

7 And when they saw *it*, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

And the Pharisees, and other self-conceited *persons who saw* [*it*], were very much offended at the particular regard that Jesus shewed him; and they *all murmured, saying, He is gone in to refresh himself at a man's* house[d], *who is* certainly *a* notorious *sinner*, since he follows the scandalous employment of a publican.

7

8 And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* four-fold.

But as *Zaccheus* now was quite another man than he had been before, and Divine Grace had changed his heart, that he might fully obviate these reflections, and manifest the truth of his conversion, he *stood forth* in the face of all the company, *and said to the Lord* with great reverence and affection, *Behold, O Lord,* I acknowledge the sins of my past life, and desire to testify my repentance for them by an entire and immediate reformation; as the first-fruits of which, I openly declare, that *the half of my goods I give to the poor; and* out of the remainder, *if I wrongfully have taken any thing from any man* by injurious charges or oppressive claims[e], *I* am ready, not only to *restore* a fifth part more than the principal (which is all that the law requires in such cases besides the trespass-offering, Lev. vi. 2—5. and Numb. v. 7, 8), but even to return [*him*] *four-fold*[f].

8

And

[d] *He is gone in to refresh himself,* &c.] The phrase καλαλυσαι παρα τινι, properly signifies, *to halt at a person's house on a journey,* referring to the laying down their own burdens, or loosening them from their beasts at such times and places. See *Wolf.* Vol. I. p. 733.

[e] *If I wrongfully have taken any thing,* &c.] The word συκοφαντησα (as Heinsius has abundantly shewn) may properly signify any kind of *oppression*, especially under the *pretence of law.* (Compare Eccles. iv. 1. and v. 8. *Septuag.*) It seems therefore not so proper to limit it, as *our translation* does, to an injury done *by a false accusation*, which implies something of a formal *trial*, and *defence* of the party accused; whereas many *frauds* and *oppressions* might be practised by such a *tax-gatherer* where nothing of this sort occurred.

[f] *I restore him four-fold.*] This was the utmost that the *Jewish law* required, even in cases of a fraudulent concealment and conviction (unless where *an ox* had been *killed* or *sold*, and so its labour lost to the owner, and the discovery rendered more difficult; Exod. xxii. 1.) for the phrase of *restoring seven-fold* (Prov. vi. 31.) seems only *proverbial*, to express making *abundant satisfaction.* But if a man not legally convicted or accused, voluntarily discovered a fraud he had committed, besides his *trespass-offering*, he was to *add to the principal* only *a fifth part.* Lev. vi. 5.

SECT. CXLIII.

Luke XIX. 9.

And Jesus said to Zaccheus, and to them that were about *him, Surely to-day is salvation come to this house;* and it is evidently to be seen that spiritual blessings are imparted to it, and designed for it, when such a penitent and religious temper is expressed; *since,* notwithstanding all the sins he has committed, it is now manifest that even *this man also is a* true *son of Abraham,* not only descended lineally from him[8], but of a character in some measure worthy of so 10 honourable a descent. And therefore, notwithstanding all your murmurings, I rejoice in the consequences of this happy visit to him, as answering the great purposes of my life; *for the Son of man,* as I have formerly declared (Mat. xviii. 11, sect. xciv.), *is come to seek and to save that which was lost;* and it is the grand design of his abode on earth to recover those who, like this poor Zaccheus in his unconverted state, were wandering in the way to everlasting ruin.

9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house: forsomuch as he also is the son of Abraham.

10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

IMPROVEMENT.

THUS did our *Lord Jesus Christ,* wheresoever he came, scatter blessings around him, both to the souls and the bodies of men. Luke xix. 2, 3. Who can wonder that *Zaccheus* had a curiosity *to see such a person!* And how happily did that curiosity end! *Christ* graciously *observed him,* and, with an amiable frankness and openness of heart, invited himself to be *a Guest* at his house; choosing to accept the 5 entertainment of a *publican,* and to distinguish with a particular regard one that was so desirous to see him. And let us diligently observe how happy *a change* this visit produced in the master of 9 the family. O *Zaccheus,* well wast thou repaid for thine hospitality when *salvation came to thine house,* and the *Saviour* himself bore witness to thee as *a son of Abraham!*

What

Zaccheus therefore shews the sincerity of his repentance by such an offer.—Some *commentators* (with *Salmasius, de Fœn.* p. 242) have remarked, that oppressive *publicans* were by the *Roman law* required to *restore four-fold;* but this was only after judgment obtained, where they had been guilty of extorting by force; whereas before conviction it was enough to make *restitution* of what had been taken; and even after it, in common cases, all that the law required was restoring *twice as much. (Leg. locatio Vectigal.* § *quod. illic.* and *L. hoc edicto effic. Digest. de Publicanis.)*—Archbishop *Tillotson* justly observes, that had more than an *eighth part* of Zaccheus's possessions been unjustly gotten, he could not have been able to make *such restitution,* after having given away *half* of what he now had *to the poor,* even though he had stripped himself of all. *Tillotson's Works,* Vol. III. p. 86.

8 Descended lineally from him.] The name of Zaccheus (which is the same with Zaccai, Ezra ii. 9) shews he was a Jew. See *Lightfoot, Hor. Hebr. in loc.* and *Salmasius, de Fœn.* p. 386.

What cannot the grace of God effect? This *publican* was in the morning contriving only how he might increase his estate by all possible methods of gain; and, before evening, he cries out, *Lord the half of my goods I give to the poor.* Thus does the *Spirit of Christ* operate on the soul, producing in it the fruits of righteousness and charity to our fellow-creatures, as well as of love to God and faith in the Redeemer. And surely the *miracle* by which *the walls of Jericho* were many ages before thrown down by the *sound of rams-horns,* was not greater in its kind than that which now triumphed over the heart of *Zaccheus,* and threw down all the obstacles which corrupt nature had formed against the entrance of *Christ* into it. SECT. cxiii. Ver. 8

Now were his eyes opened, and he saw in a moment how much more valuable *the pearl of price* was than all the *riches* he could part with to procure it. And he judged rightly of religion when he saw the necessity not only of *faith,* but of *charity* too; and not only of *charity,* but of *restitution* also to those whom he had injured, without which the highest pretences to *charity* are but presenting to God *robbery for a burnt-offering.*

Our Lord's progress is marked with another work of Divine power and beneficence in *opening the eyes of the blind.* With what *importunity* was the cure desired! And when the petitioner was for a while *discouraged,* with what eagerness was that *importunity* repeated, *Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!* Thus will the sinner cry to *Jesus* when he sees how much he needs him. But, alas! men are not aware of their spiritual indigence and distress: they *say* they *are rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that they are wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* (Rev. iii. 17.) Mark x. 46. *& seq.* 48

When once they come to be awakened to a just sense of their case, there is then room for hope, and great encouragement for their address. We may in such circumstances say to them, as was said to *Bartimeus, Be of good courage, rise, he calleth thee.* With pleasure should we deliver such a message; with pleasure should we lead on the *lame* and the *blind,* the weak and the trembling, in their application to *Christ;* and in all the instances, in which his victorious grace is exercised, should join with those who have received it in *glorifying God,* and in celebrating the *praise* of this Deliverer, whom he has mercifully raised up for his people. 49 Luke xviii. 43

SECT.

SECT. CXLIV.

Christ delivers the parable of the ten pounds committed by a prince to his servants, and represents the vengeance taken by him on his rebellious subjects. Luke XIX. 11—28.

SECT. CXLIV.

Luke XIX. 11

LUKE XIX. 11.

NOW Jesus, on occasion of Zaccheus's conversion, having expressly said that he was come to be a Saviour, the people, *as they heard these things*, were ready to conclude that at his coming to Jerusalem he would openly declare himself to be the promised Messiah; but *he continued* [*his discourse*] *and spake a* very useful and instructive *parable, because he was* now drawing *near to Jerusalem*[a], *and* he perceived *they thought that the kingdom of God would immediately be revealed* among them, and that he, as the Messiah, would assume the government, and not only free Israel from the Roman yoke, but spread his triumphs over all the heathen nations.

12 In order *therefore* to rectify their notions on this head, and to warn them of the danger they would incur by rejecting him when they saw those secular views disappointed, *he* offered to their consideration this similitude; and *said*,

A certain person of a noble birth went to a distant country in order *to receive*, from a superior prince there, an investiture to *a kingdom*, which was then fallen *to himself, and* of which the place where he dwelt made a part[b], intending afterwards *to return*, and fix his residence in his own country.

13 *And* before he set out on his journey, *having called ten of his servants, he delivered*

LUKE XIX. 11.

AND as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered

[a] *Because he was near to Jerusalem.*] The following *parable* considered in this view, as suited to the circumstance of time, and to the case of those to whom it was delivered, will appear a most wise and seasonable admonition; and by neglecting the instruction it was designed to give them, the Jews deservedly brought ruin on themselves.

[b] *Went to a distant country to receive a kingdom, &c.*] The *parable* seems to suppose this *noble person* to be the son of a prince, who, on some domestic or public revolution, was to enter upon the possession of his dominions, and to be confirmed in the government of them by the approbation of some more potent state: as the kings of Judea, and other neighbouring states, frequently were by the Romans: (see *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xiv. cap. 14, (al. 26) § 4, 5, & lib. xvii. cap. 9, al. 11.) He is therefore described as setting out with the view of being owned at his return as their undoubted sovereign. (See *Le Clerc's Harmony*, p. 397.) This representation of the matter is so natural, that one would wonder what room there could be for the controversy between Mallemansius and Athanasius de Paris about it. It is quite needless to pretend that this is an *historical* narration, that Archelaus is the *nobleman* referred to, &c.

delivered them ten pounds; and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

delivered to them ten pounds[c], lodging one pound in the hands of each, *and said unto them*, *Trade* with this money *till I come* back to take an account of your improvement. (Compare Mat. xxv. 14, & seq. sect. clxv.)

sect. cxliv.

Luke XIX. 13.

14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, we will not have this man to reign over us.

But, in the mean time, some of *his citizens*, among whom he had before lived in a more private character and station, *hated him*, *and sent an embassy after him*[d], to prevent his establishment in his kingdom; expressly *saying*, *We* are at all adventures determined that we *will not have this man to reign over us*, and will endure all extremities rather than submit to his authority. And during his absence, which continued for some time, they thought themselves very secure in their insults. 14

15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

But, notwithstanding all the confidence of these rebellious citizens, they were unable to prevent his exaltation to the throne, or to deprive him of the right he had of reigning over them. *And it came to pass*, *that when he had received the kingdom*, *and was come back* with the full powers that were granted to him, *he commanded these* his *servants*, *to whom he had delivered the money*, *to be called to him*, *that he might know what improvement each* of them *had made.* 15

16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

And the first servant, who had gained the most, *came near*, *and said*, *Sir*, the improvement I have made of *thy pound* is such that it *has gained ten pounds* more. 16

17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

And when his lord had heard how diligent and careful he had been, *he said to him*, *Well done*, [*thou*] *good servant*, *since thou hast* thus *been faithful in a very little*, I will amply reward it; for I will not only give thee for thine own this treasure of which thou hast been giving me so good an account, but as my dominion is now enlarged, and many towns and tracts of land are subject to me, 17

[c] *He delivered to them ten pounds.*] The μνα, or *mina*, as it is commonly called, contained *sixty shekels*, (Ezek. xlv. 12.) and therefore, according to the common calculation of the worth of *a shekel*, placing it at *half a crown* of our money, it was *seven pounds ten shillings*; but according to Dr. Prideaux, who sets the *shekel* at *three shillings*, the *mina* was *nine pounds sterling*.—*Our Lord* probably chose to mention this *small sum* to illustrate the munificence of the master in bestowing on the faithful servant so great and noble a reward. Compare ver. 17.

[d] *Sent an embassy after him.*] This is expressed in such a manner as may intimate their *sending ambassadors* to the superior court, to enter their protest against his being admitted to the regal power, and to declare their resolution to oppose his accession. And so it well represents the solemn manner in which the Jews renounced Christ, acting as in the *name of the Lord*, and with a pretended zeal for his authority and glory.

[e] *Be*

SECT. CXLIV.

me, I will advance thee to a most honourable station under me, and *be thou governor over ten cities.*

Luke XIX. 18 *And the second came*, and delivered in his account, *saying, Sir, thy pound* which was committed to me *has* been improved in such a manner that it has *gained five pounds.* *And* the improvement he had made was pleasing to his lord, and *he said likewise unto this*, Thou hast approved thyself a good and faithful servant, and I am pleased with thy diligence, and will reward it proportionably: *be thou also* governor *over five cities*[e].

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

20 *And* after him *another* servant, who had been negligent and slothful, *came, and said, Sir, behold* [*here is*] *thy pound which* was put into my hands; it is not at all diminished, but *I have* carefully *kept* it *laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because* I knew *thou art an austere man*, [*who*] *takest up what thou didst not lay down, and reapest*, or expectest to reap, *what thou didst not sow:* and therefore apprehending I might incur thy severity if any accident should befall this money in trade, I was determined not to venture it out of mine hands, and now return it just as I received it. *But* when his lord heard him offer such a vile and groundless charge against himself as an excuse for his own negligence, *he* was filled with indignation, and *says to him, Out of thine own mouth will I condemn thee, O* [*thou*] *wicked servant:* thou hast taken upon thee to affirm, *thou knewest that I am an austere man, taking up*, as thou expressest it, *what I did not lay down, and reaping what I did not sow*[f]; and thou mightest therefore on thine own principles conclude, that I should expect to gather where I had deposited such a sum of money, and to reap where I had thus sown: *And* if it had been so, and I had really been as severe as thou wouldest basely insinuate, *why*

20 And another came saying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.

21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou laidst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant: thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

23 Wherefore then gavest

[e] *Be thou also* governor *over five cities.*] It is observable, that in Mat. xxv. 20—23, sect. clxv. where the *servants* are represented as *doubling the different sums* intrusted to each, *the reward* is spoken of as *the same*; but here, *the sums* intrusted being the same, and *the improvement* described as *different*, there is a proportionable *difference* in the *reward*; which, as it is a beautiful circumstance, was, no doubt, intended for our instruction.

[f] *Thou knewest that I am an austere man, &c.*] This is not an acknowledgment of the vile and detestable charge of *God's demanding of men* (as Dr Guyse well expresses it) *more difficult services than he has furnished them for, or would assist them in*; which is, as that pious writer truly observes, a most *unrighteous thought of God:* but his lord only argues with him on his own base principles, and shews, that even on them he would be justly condemned for his negligence.

[t] *They*

gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

why didst thou not [*then*], for thine own security, *give my money into the bank, that when I came* to call for it at my return, *I might* at least *have received it with* the common *interest*, if not with the extraordinary improvement which might have attended a successful trade? SECT. CXLIV. Luke XIX. 23

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds.

And farther to testify his displeasure, *he said to* some of *them that stood by, Take away the pound* that was intrusted with him, *from* that idle, suspicious, unfaithful creature, who might otherwise have had that, and much more, allotted *him* for his own property, *and give it to him that has ten pounds.* 24

25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

But they were much surprised at his assigning it to one who had before received so ample a reward; *and they said to him, Sir, he hath* already no less than *ten pounds*[g], which, with the honour and preferment thou hast farther added, is surely an abundant recompence. 25

26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given: and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

Nevertheless, the prince stood by his former award, and bestowed the other pound likewise upon him; declaring, that his faithfulness and diligence was fit to be distinguished with the most favourable and repeated notice: and in this way it is, continued he, that I resolve to act; *for I assure you*[h], *That to every one that hath*, or that improves what he hath, [*it*] *shall be given*, and he shall have yet more abundantly; *but from him that hath not*, or that acts as if he had nothing intrusted to his care, *even that which he hath*, and neglects to improve, *shall be taken away from him.* (Compare Mat. xiii. 12. xxv. 29. Mark iv. 25. and Luke viii. 18.) 26

27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither,

And having thus inquired into the conduct of his servants, and treated them according to the different use they made of what had been intrusted with them, he then proceeded to pass sentence on his rebellious citizens who had refused to have him for their king; and, with a just resentment of their base ingratitude, he said, *But* as for those *mine enemies, who* were determined to oppose my government, and *would not have me to reign over them, bring* them *hither* immediately, *and slay* [*them*] with the sword 27

g *They said to him, Sir, he hath ten pounds.*] So far as this seems to express any thing of *envy* in the fellow-servants, it is not to be regarded as a significant circumstance; but only as an incidental one, to intimate to us, that his lord gave to the diligent servant what he had gained *for himself.*

h *I assure you.*] This seems to be the import of that *phrase*, which so often occurs, *I say unto you*; as if he should have said, You may take it on my authority.

SECT. CXLIV.

sword *in my presence*[i], that others may learn a more dutiful submission by the execution of these rebels.

ther, and slay *them* before me.

Luke XIX. 27 Now all this was as if our Lord had said, Thus shall I at length appear, not as a temporal sovereign, but as the Great Eternal Judge and victorious Ruler over all, when, having received power and dominion from my Father, I shall bring all to their final account; and with infinite ease triumph over those who reject and affront my authority: take heed therefore that you be not found in their wretched number, as many will be who pretend most eagerly to desire the Messiah's appearance.

28 *And when he had spoken these things, he* continued his journey, and, leading the way, *went* on *before* his disciples, *ascending to Jerusalem*, being determined to appear there at the approaching passover, though he well knew that he was to encounter persecution and death there. (Compare Mark x. 32, sect. cxlii.)

28 And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. LET us also hear and fear. *Our Lord* is gone, and *has received*
12 *his kingdom.* He has *delivered* to us our stock, to be *improved*
13 in his service: let us be animated to *diligence* in it; for proportionable to that *diligence* will be our *reward.* Let us remember
17, 19 we labour for ourselves while we labour for him; as all the progress we make in wisdom and in goodness renders our own souls so much the happier, and will render them so to all eternity. Blessed *servants* that have the applause of such a *Master*, and share *a reward* as liberal as that conferred on a faithful steward, who should be made *governor of* a province containing *ten cities.*

19, 21 Let us beware of a *slothful neglect* of our stock: let us beware of those *hard thoughts of God* which would discourage us from pursuing his service. Above all, let us take heed, that we do not proudly and insolently *reject the government* of his *anointed Son,*
14 and either say with our tongues, or declare by our actions, *We will not have this man to reign over us:* for if we do, we *speak a word against our own lives.* He will be glorified by us, or upon us. And

[i] *Slay them* with the sword *in my presence.*] This is the exact import of the word καταφαξατε. It does indeed properly express the dreadful slaughter of the impenitent Jews, by the *sword* of each other, and of the Romans; but that does not seem the chief design of the passage, which plainly relates to the far more terrible *execution* which shall be done on all impenitent sinners in the great day, when the faithful servants of Christ shall be rewarded.

a *When*

And oh, what shall we do, if in that dreadful day he should *bring us forth* as the helpless prisoners of his justice, and command us *to be slain in his presence!* How can we withstand his power! or to the horns of what altar shall we flee for sanctuary? *O Lord, our flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and we are afraid of thy judgments;* (Psal. cxix. 120.) May we never be the miserable objects of them; but having faithfully served thee here, may *that* be to us a day of honour, reward, and triumph, which shall be to every presumptuous rebel a day of shame and terror, of dreadful execution and eternal destruction! SECT. CXLIV. Ver. 27

SECT. CXLV.

Christ is entertained at Bethany and his feet anointed by Mary. The Jewish rulers contrive to kill Lazarus. Mat. XXVI. 6—13. Mark XIV. 3---9. John XII. 1---11.

JOHN XII. 1. THEN Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

JOHN XII. 1.

THEN Jesus came, six days before the passover, to Bethany, which was a village (as was said before, John xi. 18, sect. cxl.) that lay in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, *where* the abode of *Lazarus was, who had been dead* and buried, [*and*] *whom he* lately by an amazing miracle had *raised from the dead.* SECT. CXLV. John XII. 1.

MAT. XXVI. 6. Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, [MARK XIV. 3.—]

Now at this time, *when Jesus was in Bethany*[a], where, by his frequently resorting thither, he was well known, and had many friends that very much rejoiced to see him; as he was *in the house of Simon the leper*[b]. Mat. XXVI. 6

In

a *When Jesus was in Bethany.*] Few passages in the *Harmony* have perplexed me more than this. I was long of opinion with Origen and Theophylact, defended by Le Clerc and Dr. Whitby, and especially by Dr. *Lightfoot (Harm. N. Test.* § 71, 80), and Mr. *Whiston* (in his *View of Harmony*, p. 128, 129), that the story recorded by Matthew (chap xxvi. 6—13.) and Mark (chap. xiv. 3—9.) was different from that in John: but, on maturer consideration, it appears to me more probable, that Matthew and Mark should have introduced this story a little out of its place, —that Lazarus, if he made this entertainment (which is not expressly said by John) should have made use of *Simon's house*, as more convenient for it,—and that Mary should have poured this ointment on *Christ's head and body*, as well as on *his feet*;—than that within the compass of four days Christ should have been *twice anointed* with so costly a perfume; and that the *same fault* should be found with the action, and the *same value* set on the ointment, and the *same words* used in defence of the woman; and all this in the presence of many of the *same persons:* all which improbable particulars must be admitted, if the stories be considered as different.—But, after all, I can assert nothing confidently; for there is no impossibility in the thing taken either way.

b *In the house of Simon the leper.*] It is not to be thought that he was now *a leper;* for in this case he would not have been suffered to live in a town, nor would the Jews have come to an entertainment at his house: but either he was once *a leper*, and had been cured by Jesus, or else the name was given to the family, as some considerable person in it had been formerly *a leper.*

c When

SECT. CXLV.

John XII. 2.

In testimony of their high respect and great affection for him, *they made a* handsome *supper for him there*, and treated him in the evening; which was the usual time for entertainments with the Jews, especially on the evening of their sabbath-days, which was the season when this feast was made[c]: *and Martha*, who had formerly distinguished her care on a like occasion (Luke x. 40, sect. cviii.), having seen that all things should be rightly ordered, *waited* on Christ at supper; *but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.*

JOHN XII. 2. There they made him a supper, and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

3 *Then Mary*, the other sister of Lazarus, being deeply affected with the many instances that Christ had given her of his love, and especially with his late mercy to her family, in recovering so dear a brother from the grave, was solicitous to give some uncommon token of her gratitude and respect to so excellent a guest; she therefore *took an* elegant *alabaster pot*, or vase, [*containing*] about *a pound* weight *of unadulterated ointment of spikenard*[d], [*which was*] *exceeding valuable; and, having broke* the top *of the vessel*, or shook the perfumed balsam which was in it, that it might be the better liquefied, and flow forth the easier[e], *she* came behind him, and *poured* out the greater part of *it on his head, as he sate at meat, and anointed the feet of Jesus* with the remainder; *and*, when she had done this, she, like the humble penitent mentioned above (Luke vii. 38, Vol. VI. p. 314), *wiped his feet with the* long flowing *tresses of her hair; and the* whole *house was filled with the* fragrant and delicious *odour of the ointment.*

3 Then took Mary [an alabaster-box *containing*] a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly; [MARK, and she brake the box, and poured it on his head,] [as he sat at *meat*,] and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. [MAT. XXVI. 7. MARK XIV.—3.

But

c When this feast was made.] Though Matthew and Mark relate this story, where they are speaking of what happened but *two days before the passover*, it is more probable (as we have just now shewn) that it is placed by John in its due order; and as the *following days* appear to be sufficiently distinguished, and Christ's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, which John has fixed to *the next day* (John xii. 12, sect. cxlvi.) must have been on the *first day of the week*, this entertainment therefore was on the *evening* of the day before, when the *Jewish sabbath* was over.

d *Unadulterated ointment of spikenard.*] I cannot take upon me absolutely to determine whether the word πιστικης signifies that the *ointment* was quite *genuine* and *pure* [as Casaubon and L. Capellus assert), or whether (as Grotius and Erasmus think) it be put for σπικλης, and refers to the particular part of the fragrant shrub *nardus*, of which the *ointment* was made. (See *Plin. Nat. Hist.* lib. xii. cap. 12.)—If the latter be the meaning of it, what is said of its *great value* must justify our calling it *unadulterated.*

e *Having broke* the top *of the vessel*, or shook the perfumed balsam, &c.] Sir Norton Knatchbull and Dr. Hammond maintain that συνλιψασα does not signify that she *brake* the vessel, which they think an improbable circumstance; but only that she *shook* it so as to break the coagulated parts of the rich balsam, and bring it to such a liquidity that it might be fit to pour out. Yet I must own that the *original* does not so naturally express this.

f *And*

SECT. CXLV.

MAT. XXVI. 8. But when his disciples saw *it*, [there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? And they murmured against her.] [MARK XIV. 4—5.]

JOHN XII. 4. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, which should betray him,

5 Why was not this ointment sold [for much, *even* for [MARK, more than] three hundred pence, and given to the poor? [MAT. XXVI. 9. MARK XIV. 5.—]

6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

But when his disciples observed it, there were some that were moved with inward displeasure at what appeared to them so great an extravagance; Mat. XXVI. 8 *and said* with a low voice to each other, *Why was this waste of the ointment made*, and such a quantity of this rich balsam poured out to so little purpose? *And they* secretly *murmured against her*[f], and could hardly refrain from reproaching her for it. *One of his disciples therefore* [*even*] *Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon*, that John XII. 4. wretched person *who was about to betray him*, as if he knew not how to bear such waste, expressed a peculiar emotion, and *said* aloud, *Why was not this* fine *ointment sold for a great* 5 *deal* of money; for it must have been worth [*even*] *more than three hundred pence*[g]; *and* thus it might have served for the relief of many, if the price of it had been *given to the poor?* This would surely have been approved of by our Master, as a much wiser and better way of disposing of it, than thus to lavish it away on the luxurious entertainment of a few minutes. *Now* 6. *this he said, not because he* at all *regarded the poor, but because he was*, notwithstanding all his pretended piety and zeal, *a* subtile *thief; and* as he *kept the bag* which contained their little stock, *and carried what was put into it*[h], he thought if so large a sum had come in just before he went off with it (which he was now preparing to do), he should thus have had a fine opportunity of enriching himself.

MAT. XXVI. 10. When

But Jesus knowing the design of Judas, and Mat. XXVI 10 perceiving that others were secretly joining with him

f *And they murmured against her.*] Whether this relates to more than Judas cannot certainly be said; since it is well known that the *plural number* is sometimes put for the *singular*. See Gen. viii. 4; xix. 29; Judg. xii. 7; and Mat. xxvii. 44.—Some have thought Judas Iscariot was the son of that Simon in whose house the feast was made; but the name was so common that it cannot be concluded with any certainty.

g *More than three hundred pence.*] It is to be remembered that these were *Roman pence*, and consequently amounted to *nine pounds seven shillings and six-pence*: the expression only intimates a general guess at the value by a *round sum* (for such *three hundred denarii* were, though the correspondent value with us is not so); as if we should say, on a like occasion, it must have been worth above *ten pounds*.

h *Carried what was put into it.*] The learned *Elsner* (I suppose to avoid the seeming tautology) would render ἐβάσαζεν, *he took away*, or *carried off*, that is, for his own use, what was put into the purse or bag. He refers to John xx. 15, and Mat. iii. 11, viii. 17, as instances of such a use of it; to which he adds others from Polybius, Athenæus, and other good authors. (*Elsn. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 333.) But the meaning here may be, that he had not only the keeping of the bag at that time, but that it was his stated office to take care of it and manage its stock; and therefore I choose not to follow Elsner's *version* since βάσαζε never signifies *to carry off* a part privately, which would have been expressed by ἀποφέρειν, as it is Acts v. 2.

i *She*

SECT. CXLV.

him in this severe and uncharitable censure, without taking any notice of that vile principle from which he knew [*it*] proceeded in him, directed his discourse to his disciples, and *said to them, Why do you* give such *trouble* and uneasiness to *the* good *woman*, of whose piety and friendship we have had so long an experience? *Let her alone* in what she is about; *for* what *she has* now *performed* is *a good work*, and she deserves to be commended for the great respect she has been shewing *towards me. For* as to what has been suggested now in favour of *the poor, you have* them *always with you; and* providence will continually so order it, that some compassionable objects shall be still among you, that *whenever you please you may* have an opportunity to *do them good: but me you have not always* with you; for I am soon to leave you, and to be placed beyond the reach of your kindness. And indeed my departure out of the world is so near, that, with respect to this action of our friend Mary, which you are ready to condemn, I may say, that *she has reserved this* ointment *for the day of my burial*[i]: And, not knowing whether she may have an opportunity of assisting in those last offices, *she has* now *done what she could; for in that she has poured* out *this ointment on my body, she has* in a manner *come before* the time thus *to anoint* and to embalm *my body for the burial;* so that you may almost look upon it as a work of piety and love to a dead friend, where a generous heart will not be sparing. And, on the whole, though you have such hard thoughts of what she has been doing, it shall not finally turn to her reproach or damage; but as I graciously accept it, so *I assuredly say unto you*, That *wheresoever this gospel* of mine *is preached*, and it in time shall have its triumph *over the whole world, this* very action

Mat. XXVI. 10.

11

John XII. 7.

Mark XIV. 8.

9

When Jesus understood *it*, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? [let her alone;] for she hath wrought a good work upon me. [MARK XIV. 6. JOHN XII. 7.—]

11 For ye have the poor always with you, [and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good:] but me ye have not always. [MARK XIV. 7. JOHN XII. 8.]

JOHN XII. — 7. Against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

MARK XIV. 8. She hath done what she could: [for in that she hath poured this ointment on my body,] she is come afore-hand to anoint my body to the burying. [MAT. XXVI. 12.]

9 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that [this woman] hath done, shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. [MAT. XXVI. 13.]

i *She has reserved this for the day of my burial.*] Mr. *Whiston* (in his *View of the Harmony*, p. 129) thinks this is as if *our Lord* had said, "She has spent but a little of this ointment now; but has reserved the main part of it to pour upon my head some days hence, which shall be so near my death, that it may be considered as a kind of embalming." But besides the general reasons against believing the action repeated, which have been mentioned in *note* [a], it is unnatural to suppose that, in the transport of her love and gratitude, she would use this little *management* of keeping back most that was in the vessel; or that if she had, John would have mentioned the *quantity she took*, which was no way to his purpose, or have taken notice of the *room's being filled with the odour of it*: not to say, that the *prediction* which Mr. Whiston supposes *our Lord* to utter, is quite trifling, and would seem to bespeak its own accomplishment in a manner which he never would have stooped to.

Who

action *also which this* pious and affectionate *woman has* now *performed, shall* be inserted in the history of my life, and *be spoken of* with honour *for a memorial of her* friendship and affection to me: so that her name shall be embalmed in such a manner, as to be far more fragrant than the perfume which she has poured forth on my head and my feet. (Compare Eccles. vii. 1.)

sect. cxlv. Mat. XIV. 8.

JOHN XII. 9. Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

Now these things passed at a public entertainment: *a great multitude of the Jews therefore,* who had been dubious whether Jesus would come up to the passover or not (compare John xi. 56, sect cxli.), quickly got intelligence of it, and *knew that he was there* in Bethany; *and they came* thither in crowds from Jerusalem, and that indeed *not only on account of Jesus,* who had been retired for some time, *but also* out of curiosity, *that they might see Lazarus, whom he had* lately *raised from the dead,* who now appeared publicly with him[k].

John XII. 9.

10 But the chief priests consulted, that they might put Lazarus also to death;

But the chief priests, and other members of the sanhedrim, were filled on this occasion with such rage and envy, that, as they had already resolved on the death of Jesus, they *consulted also how they might* find some method to *kill Lazarus,* either by public prosecution or private assassination: *For* they well knew that *many of the Jews* deserted them, and *went away* to Bethany *on his account, and* were so powerfully struck with the convincing evidence of so astonishing a miracle, that they *believed on Jesus;* and while such a monument of his power and goodness continued they were afraid lest more should revolt to him.

10

11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

11

IMPROVEMENT.

WE see how happily *Mary* improved by *sitting at the feet of Jesus,* and what evidence she gave of her having *chosen the better part.* (Compare Luke x. 39, 42) Like *her,* let us with humble thankfulness bestow *our very best* on him, who has given us *that* and every thing else. She gladly *poured out* her choicest *ointment* on him, whose *name* is to every true believer far more fragrant than

John XII. 3.

k Who now appeared publicly with him.] Perhaps, after so extraordinary a series of providences as Lazarus had passed through, he might choose to spend some time in retirement and extraordinary devotion; and it is natural to suppose he would endeavour to avoid the importunity of crowds, who out of curiosity would be pressing in upon him, perhaps with some impertinent inquiries.

a *Were*

SECT. CXLV. than *ointment poured forth.* (Cant. i. 3.) How does her generous love shame those who grudge every expence in the cause of *Christ!*

When we are relieving the pious *poor*, we are, as it were, *anointing the feet of Jesus:* we are indeed performing a service far more acceptable than any thing of this kind could in itself be. Ver. 8 Let us remember that *we have the poor always with us;* and that they are permitted to continue among us *that we may do them good whenever we please.* Far be it from us to imagine that what 4—6 we so spend is *waste.* Let all who would not share in the guilt and punishment of *Judas* abhor the vile hypocrisy of making a pretended concern for the *poor* a cloak for an opportunity of enriching themselves with *their spoils;* than which nothing can be more infamous, or can have a directer tendency to mingle the consuming curse of a righteous and almighty God with all that a man possesses.

10 The *Pharisees* conspired to *kill Lazarus.* What a mixture was this of cruelty and folly! What was *his crime?* or what could *their hope* be? From what *death* could not *Christ* have delivered him? or from what *tomb* could he not again have recalled him? Yet something like this is the madness of all who hate and persecute others for being the trophies of the Redeemer's victory and grace.

But let not his servants fear; *their Redeemer is strong, the Lord of hosts is his name.* (Jer. l. 34.) His *work is perfect;* and the day and hour is approaching in which his triumph over all his enemies shall be so complete, that his friends shall be for ever secure, not only from being destroyed, but from being alarmed by them.

SECT. CXLVI.

Christ rides in triumph to Jerusalem on an asses colt. Mat. XXI. 1—9; Mark XI. 1—10; Luke XIX. 29—40; John XII. 12—19.

MAT. XXI. 1.

SECT. CXLVI. Mat. XXI. 1. *AND* after Jesus had been anointed by Mary in the manner related in the preceding section, *it came to pass on the next day,* which was the first day of the week, that he proceeded on his journey with his disciples; and *when they drew nigh to Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage and Bethany,* or to the outward boundaries of these two places[a], *at* the foot of the *mount of Olives*

MAT. XXI. 1.

AND [LUKE, it came to pass,] [JOHN, on the next day,] when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage [and Bethany,] unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two

[a] *Were come to Bethphage and Bethany.*] As Bethany was the town from which *our Lord* set out, some have supposed there were *two places* of this name; of which the *one* was

two [of his] disciples. [MARK XI. 1. LUKE XIX. 29. JOHN XII. 12.—]

2 Saying unto them, Go [your way] into the village over-against you; and straightway [as soon as ye be entered into it,] ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt [tied] with her, [whereon never man [LUKE, yet] sat;] loose [him,] and bring [LUKE, *him* hither] unto me. [MARK XI. 2. LUKE XIX. 30.]

3 And if any man say unto you, [LUKE, Why do ye loose *him?*] ye shall say [LUKE, thus unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him:] and straightway he will send [him hither.] [MARK XI. 3. LUKE XIX. 31.]

MARK XI. 4. And [the disciples] [LUKE, that were sent] went their way, and found [LUKE, even as he had said unto them,] the colt tied by the door without, in a place where two ways met: and they loose him, [as Jesus commanded them.] [MAT. XXI. 6. LUKE XIX. 32.]

LUKE XIX. 33. And as they were loosing the colt, [certain of them

Olives, which lay to the east of the city, *then Jesus*, as the time appointed for his sufferings was just at hand, being resolved that he would make a public entry into Jerusalem, *sent* out *two of his disciples*, *Saying*, *to them*, *Go your way into the village* which lies yonder *over-against you; and immediately, as soon as you enter into it, you shall* there *find a she-ass* standing *tied* at a door, *and a* young *foal tied* also *with her*, *on which no man ever yet sate;* lay hold of the foal, and *untie him* directly, without any scruple or concern about the owner's leave, *and bring [him] hither to me: And if any man* should take notice of what you are doing, and *say to you, Why do you* offer to *untie* the foal, and lead *[him]* away? *you* in reply *shall say thus to him*, *Because* Jesus *the Lord has need of him: and*, in regard to the authority of my name and character, *he will immediately send him hither* with the dam, that I may use either of them as I shall choose, to ride into the city: so that you may bring them both hither, without any apprehension of accusation or scandal.

And the two *disciples that were sent* on this errand presumed not to debate the reasonableness of the orders he had given them; but presently *went their way, and found, just as he had said unto them*[b], *the colt* with its dam *tied abroad at the door* of a house, which stood *in a* very open *place* at the entrance of the village, *where two roads met: and, as Jesus commanded them, they* immediately began to *untie* the colt, that they might lead *him* away.

But as they were thus *untying the colt*, providence so ordered it, effectually to prevent any clamour or reflection[c], that the owners of it were near

SECT. CXLVI.

MAT. XXI. 1.

2

3

MARK XI. 4

LUKE XIX. 33

was *fifteen furlongs* from Jerusalem (as it is said, John xi. 18), and the *other*, that he now was come to, joined to the *mount of Olives*, and was but a *sabbath-day's journey*, or but *eight furlongs* distant from the city. (Compare Luke xxiv. 50. and Acts i. 12). But it is hardly probable there were *two places* of the same name within a mile of each other; and it is much more natural to suppose that the limits of Bethany might extend to the *mount of Olives*, and be contiguous to the boundaries of Bethphage, which was part of the suburbs of Jerusalem, and reached from the *mount of Olives* to the walls of the city. See *Lightfoot, Harmon. N. T.* § 72, and *Whitby* on Mark xi. 1.

[b] *Just as he had said unto them.*] The exact knowledge which *our Lord* shewed of so many minute and most fortuitous particulars must surely impress the minds of these messengers greatly, and establish the faith of his followers. It is observable that many such things occurred a little before his death, which, considered in this view, have a peculiar beauty. Compare Mat. xxvi. 31—35. Mark xiv. 15, 16. and Luke xxii. 10—13.

[c] Effectually to prevent any clamour or reflection.] Perhaps had not the *owners* of the

SECT. CXLVI.

near at hand, with several other persons. And *some of them that stood* by *there*, and particularly *the owners of it, said unto them, What are you doing* there? *Why do you* offer *to untie the colt*, which you know is none of your own? *And they said to them, even as Jesus had ordered*, We mean no injury to you, or to the colt; but Jesus, the Messenger of the blessed God, *the* great *Lord* and Proprietor of all, *has need of him*, and would borrow him for a little while, to ride into the city; and his character is too well known to give you any reason to fear you shall lose any thing by your readiness to accommodate him in this little instance. *And* on this *they* were thoroughly satisfied, and *let them go* away with it[d].

Luke XIX. 33 Mark XI. 6

them that stood there,] the owners thereof said unto them, [What do ye?] Why loose ye the colt? [MARK XI. 5.]

MARK XI. 6. And they said unto them, even as Jesus had commanded; [The Lord hath need of him:] and they let them go. [LUKE XIX. 34.]

7 *And* thus *they brought the colt to Jesus, and the ass* its dam went with it: *and*, as they had neither of them any saddle, they *threw their* loose *mantles upon* the backs of *them* both, that Jesus might take his choice which he would ride, and might sit the more easily and decently on either: *and* as he chose the colt, though (as was just now said) it had never been broke or backed before, *they set Jesus thereon*[e].

7 And they brought the colt [and the ass] to Jesus, and cast their garments [on them;] [LUKE, and they set Jesus thereon.] [MAT. XXI. 7. LUKE XIX. 35.]

8 *And many*, [*even*] *a very great multitude*, who now surrounded him, *as he sate on the young ass*[f], [*and*] *went on* to the city, in token of their respect to him, *spread their mantles in the way*, that he might ride as upon one continued carpet; *and others cut down* little *branches from the trees*,

8 And many, [*even* a very great multitude,] [LUKE, as he [JOHN, sat on the young ass, *and*] went *on*,] spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches

the beasts happened to be by, and had not Luke expressly mentioned them, the malice of ancient or modern *infidels* would have found some occasion for raising an outcry on the ambiguity of the words, *The Lord has need of him.* Its being a weak and contemptible cavil would not have prevented their using it, as we learn by abundant experience.

[d] *They let them go.*] If these people were not (as they possibly might be) the acquaintance of Christ, they might easily meet with him at Jerusalem, if they had a mind to inquire after *the ass and colt*; or they might be left according to their direction at some house in the city, or be sent back by some of *our Lord's* attendants; though the *evangelists* do not descend to such minute particulars.—There is no appearance of Christ's intending to shew his sovereignty in *transferring the property* of these creatures; and though, no doubt, he had a power to do it, his usual prudence would probably direct him to wave it at a time when so many *eyes* were *upon him for evil.*

[e] *They set Jesus thereon.*] As all the *evangelists* but Matthew speak expressly of his *riding on the colt*, what Matthew says of *bringing them* both *to Jesus*, and *putting on them their clothes, and setting him thereon* (though it be spoken in the *plural* number), implies no more than setting him *upon the mantles* thrown on that which he made choice of, and is no intimation of his *riding upon both.*

[f] *As he sate on the young ass.*] John says that *Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sate thereon:* but as the larger accounts given by the other *evangelists* in a great measure supersede this, I could only bring in a part of that clause here; though in the whole of this work I am as careful as possible to omit no one circumstance that any of the sacred writers mention.

branches [from] off the trees, and strewed *them* in the way. [MAT. XXI. 8. LUKE XIX. 36. JOHN XII. 14.—]

trees, that stood by the side of the road, and gathered flowers which grew near it, *and strewed them in the way;* according to the usual custom of expressing the public joy on the arrival of any illustrious prince. (Compare 1 Mac. xiii. 51, and 2 Mac. x. 7.)

SECT. CXLVI.

Mark XI. 8.

MAT. XXI. 4. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, [as it is written,] [JOHN XII. 14.]

Now all this was done, and permitted by Jesus, *that* what was prophesied of old concerning the Messiah might be fulfilled in him; and that by this occurrence *it might be* literally *accomplished which was spoken by the prophet* Zechariah[g], *saying*, (*as it is written*, Zech. ix. 9),

Mat. XXI. 4

5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, [Fear not;] behold, thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting

"*Say ye to the daughter of Sion*, rejoice greatly, and shout, O daughter, or inhabitant, of Jerusalem; and *fear not* any of thine enemies: for *behold*, with pleasing amazement, *thy King*, the great expected Messiah, *cometh unto thee, meek*, and having salvation; *and*, in token of the gentleness of his administration, and his strict observance of the Divine law[h], he shall make his public entrance into thy city, not as other princes affect to appear, in a proud triumphal chariot, or riding on a stately managed horse, decked with a variety of splendid ornaments, and attended with a pompous cavalcade; but he shall appear like one of thine ancient patriarchs

5

[g] *It might be* literally *accomplished which was spoken*, &c.] I shall not enter on a particular detail of the reasons which induce me to believe that the prophecy of Zechariah is here quoted according to its primary and *literal* sense; but content myself with referring the reader to Bishop *Chandler's Defence of Christianity*, p. 102—107, and Mr. *Bullock's Vindication*, p. 175, 176.

[h] His strict observance of the Divine law.] The learned and ingenious Bishop *Sherlock* has set this fact in a most just and beautiful light, in his *Fourth Dissertation* annexed to the last edition of his *Discourse on Prophecy*. God, that he might keep the people of Israel in a more sensible dependance on himself, forbade the use of that strong, generous, and majestic animal *the horse* (Job xxxix. 19—25) in their armies, as also of *chariots*, Deut. xvii. 16. (Compare Josh. xi. 6. Judges v. 15.) David therefore, who rode himself on a *mule*, and ordered Solomon to do so on his coronation-day (1 Kings i. 33, 34), burnt the *chariots* he took from the enemies, and *hamstrung* their *horses*, to make them unfit for war. (2 Sam. viii. 4.) And afterwards, when Solomon (1 Kings iv. 26.) and succeeding princes *multiplied horses*, they were rebuked by the prophets, and chastised by God for it. (See Isa. ii. 6, 7. xxxi. 1. and Hos. xiv. 3.) And the removal of them is spoken of as matter of promise in the days of the Messiah, Hos. i. 7. Mic. v. 10, 11. and Zech. ix. 10.—It is therefore with great propriety that Christ in his most public triumph chose, according to the prophecy before us, to *ride on an ass*.—Nor are we to imagine there was any thing mean and ridiculous in it; for the *eastern asses* are a much larger and more beautiful animal than ours; and it plainly appears the patriarchs and judges of the Jewish nation thought it no disgrace to ride upon them; of which Abraham (Gen. xxii. 3), Moses (Exod. iv. 20), and Jair's family (Judges x. 4), are instances. Nay, *magistrates* are spoken of by the general description of those that *rode on white asses*. Judges v. 10. (Compare Numb. xxii. 21. 2 Sam. xvi. 2. xvii. 23. xix. 26.) So that all the *ridicule* which has fallen on this passage must, to speak with all possible charity, be retorted on the *ignorance* of those who have taken upon them to censure what they did not understand.

sect. cxlvi.

triarchs or judges, in the earliest and best ages of thy commonwealth, *sitting upon an ass; yea* he shall come upon *a colt, the foal of an ass*, which though it had never been backed before, shall in his miraculous hands be tractable and gentle."

sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. [JOHN XII. 15.]

Mat. XXI. 5

John XII. 16

Now it is to be observed that *his* apostles and other *disciples did not understand these things at first*, nor recollect the correspondence between the preceding prophecy and the event: *but when Jesus was* raised from the dead, and *glorified* at the right-hand of the Father, from whence he sent down his Spirit to instruct them in the mysteries of his word and kingdom, *then they remembered that these things were written concerning him* as the Messiah; *and* [*that*] *they had done these things unto him*, without any designed reference to the prophecy, which at the time of its accomplishment they did not so much as think of.

JOHN XII. 16. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and *that* they had done these things unto him.

Luke XIX. 37

And when he was come nigh to the city, [*and was*] *now at* the lower part of *the descent of the mount of Olives*, which lay, as was said before, to the east of Jerusalem, and was but a few furlongs from it, *A great multitude of people, who were come* from Galilee and other parts *to* celebrate *the feast* of the passover, *having heard*, by some who had run before the rest of the company, *that Jesus was coming* in this solemn pomp *to Jerusalem*, immediately resolved to go and usher him in with all possible respect: And accordingly they *took branches of palm-trees*, which were commonly carried before those who rode in public triumph, *and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosannah!* May God save and prosper him! *Blessed* [*be*] *the King of Israel, who comes in the name*, and by the authority, *of the Lord* our God, to redeem us, and to rule over us. (Compare Psal. cxviii. 25, 26.)

LUKE XIX. 37.—And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives,

John XII. 12

JOHN XII.—12. Much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

13 Took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna, Blessed *is* the king of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord.

17 *Now* as he rode along in all this pomp, *the people who were with him*[k] *when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and* by that almighty voice *raised him from the dead*, among whom he had

17 The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised

[i] *Hosannah!* May God save and prosper him!] I suppose few readers need to be informed that the Hebrew word *Hosannah*, signifies *Save we beseech thee.*

[k] *Now the people who were with him.*] It is impossible that their not understanding the prophecy of Zechariah now, or recollecting it afterwards (which are the things mentioned in the preceding verse, John xii. 16), should be *the reason* of what follows here. It appears then from hence (and it is very material to observe it), that ὃτι [*therefore*] is sometimes used in a looser sense, so as to answer to [*and*] or [*now*] in our language.

raised him from the dead, bare record.

had lain part of four days, *testified* [*it*] to the strangers who were come up out of the country, and told them what a glorious miracle they had been eye-witnesses to. [*And*] *for this cause,* among others, and indeed with a peculiar regard to this, *the people also met him* from the city in the manner which has been described above; *because they heard that he had done this* astonishing *miracle,* which, in some circumstances, exceeded any which he had wrought before.

sect. cxlvi.

John XII. 18.

18 For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

Luke XIX. — 37. [And] the whole multitude of the disciples [that went before, and that followed,] began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen: [Mat. XXI. 9. —Mark XI. 9.—]

And the whole multitude of the disciples that had attended him from Bethany, both they *that went before* him, *and* they *that followed* after, in his triumphant procession, *began* greatly *to rejoice, and to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works* and glorious miracles *which they had seen* performed by him on a great variety of occasions, and which they now particularly called to mind.

Luke XIX. 37

38 [*And* cried,] saying, [Hosanna to the Son of David;] blessed [is he, *even*] the king that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. [Mat. XXI. — 9. — Mark XI.—9.]

[*And*] as they now were met by a vast concourse of people from Jerusalem, *they* joined together in their triumphs and congratulations; and *cried* with all their might, *saying,* "*Hosannah to the* great illustrious *Son of David,* who now vouchsafes to make his public appearance among us; *blessed be he,* [*even*] *the* long-expected *King* and Sovereign of God's people, *who* now *comes* to us *in the name of the Lord!* May the most exalted honours be paid him! May continued prosperity attend him! Let there be *peace in heaven,* and a rich variety of Divine favours be dispensed from thence; *and,* in return for them, let *glory* be given to God *in the* most exalted strains, and let all the *highest* orders of angels join in his praises!

38

Mark XI. 10. Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest. [Mat. XXI.—9.]

Blessed and prosperous *be the* sacred *kingdom of our father David!* May it speedily be established, and may it long flourish; even that kingdom which is not gained by the alarms of war and garments rolled in blood, but *which comes in the name of the Lord,* and renders itself, by that powerful influence on men's spirits which we now feel, victorious over whatsoever would oppose it! *Hosannah* therefore *in the highest* strains! Repeat again and again your songs and your congratulations." Thus they expressed their joyful and rapturous expectations of his assuming the royal dignity, and vindicating Israel from the Roman oppression; and, emboldened by the display of his power in the resurrection of Lazarus, they feared not the resentment

Mark XI. 10

SECT. CXLVI.

sentment of their present masters for declaring themselves thus openly in his favour.

Luke XIX. 39 *And some of the* proud and envious *Pharisees*, who were *among the multitude* as spies rather than friends, were much offended at the high honours that were paid to Jesus, and maliciously *said to him*, with an intent to embarrass and expose him, *Master*, canst thou be pleased with all this noise? or can it be consistent with thy great humility to suffer it? Why dost thou not *rebuke thy disciples* for such dangerous acclamations as these? Dost thou intend to give encouragement to such seditious speeches, and to stand by the consequences which may follow them?

LUKE XIX. 39. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

40 *And* Jesus, who was now determined to lay aside that reserve which for wise reasons *he* had formerly used, *answered and said unto them, I tell you, that* the reason for these acclamations is so plain, and the evidences of it so strong, that it must be great stupidity not to see, and great obstinacy not to own it: so that *if these should be silent*, one might almost expect that *the* very *stones should immediately cry out*, to proclaim my kingdom: yea, God would even animate the stones on such an occasion, rather than he would suffer me to want this triumph, so evidently marked out by his prophets.

40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

John XII. 19 *The Pharisees then*, turning from him with envy and rage, *said to each other, Perceive ye* not *that you gain no* manner of *advantage* by all your consultations, and the decrees of your sandhedrim? *Behold, the* whole *world is gone after him*, till he has now thrown off the mask, and taken upon him to declare his pretences; which, if the people thus fall in with them, must necessarily end in our ruin, and perhaps in that of the whole nation.

JOHN XII. 19. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him.

IMPROVEMENT.

John xii. 14 LET us behold this *meek triumph* of the great *Redeemer* with pleasure! He entered the capital of his kingdom *riding upon an ass;* a circumstance in which he made, though by no means a ridiculous, yet to be sure a very humble figure: yea, he Mat. xxi. 4, 5 appeared exactly as the *prophet* deserибed him, upon *a colt, the foal of an ass;* not yet grown up to its best form, nor adorned Mark xi. 4, 7 with any sumptuous or elegant furniture, but only covered with the *mantles* of his poor attendants, and perhaps with nothing better

better for a bridle than *a cord*, which might have *tied* the foal *at the door.* SECT. CXLVI.

Let us imagine that we saw the *Son of God*, and the *King of Israel*, thus proceeding towards *Jerusalem*, and the *people meeting him*, and surrounding him with their acclamations: *Hosannah! Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord!* Do not our hearts spring at the sound? Do we not, as it were in spirit, go forth with them, and join in their sublime, though simple song? Thus let us welcome him into our hearts! Let us echo it back! *Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, with Divine authority, and Divine blessings in his hands! And *blessed be the kingdom* he hath erected! May perpetual prosperity attend it! May *the north give up* a swarm of subjects to it; and may not *the south keep back* her swarthy sons! May *nations be born at once*, and thousands together made *willing in the day of his power!* Surely if these are not our affectionate wishes, the warm and zealous sentiments of our very hearts, it may almost be expected that the very *stones should cry out*, to accuse and condemn our ungrateful stupidity. John xii. 13. Mark xi. 10 Luke xix. 40

Unhappy *Pharisees*, who looked on these *triumphs* with envy and rage, and grieved that *the world was gone after him!* Yet less unhappy had they not renewed their attempts against him, those fatal attempts which ended in their ruin! But who, that had seen the *procession*, and heard the *shouts* of the transported *multitude*, could have imagined or believed, that before the end of the week they should have turned their voices against him, and instead of *Hosannah*, should have cried out, *Crucify him?* Yet so it was, and *Christ* knew it would be so. Such is the uncertainty of popular applause! Who would then purchase it at the expence of his conscience, or even of his ease? John xii. 19

These transports were raised by the hopes of a *temporal kingdom;* and when those hopes were disappointed, these transports were turned into rage. Oh that there may be none, under all the engagements of a *Christian*, and even of a *ministerial* profession, who proclaim *Christ* with great appearances of zeal, only that they may exalt themselves; and wish prosperity to *his kingdom*, only as it may promote their own interest in a *world* from which it was the great design of his death to *redeem* his servants. Mark xi. 10

SECT. CXLVII.

Christ having wept over Jerusalem, enters into it, and vindicates the temple a second time from the profanation of the traders. Mat. XXI. 10—16. Mark XI. 11.—Luke XIX. 41, *to the end.*

LUKE XIX. 41.

AND when he was come near, he beheld

LUKE XIX. 41.

THUS our Lord went on in his triumphant progress toward Jerusalem; *and when he was* SECT. CXLVII. Luke XIX. 41

SECT. CXLVII.

Luke XIX. 41

was come near it, and had now the view of it before him (the place where he was commanding an extensive prospect of it), *beholding the city* in all its present beauty and glory, and considering the calamities which would shortly be its ruin, *he* tenderly *wept over it*, *Saying*, *Oh that thou hadst known*[a], *even thou* unhappy city, which art now on the very point of being devoted to final destruction! Oh that at length, though with the greatest obstinacy thou hast despised the messages of all thy prophets, thou hadst but known and seriously regarded, *at least in this thy* latest *day* and opportunity of grace, *the* important *things which belong to thy peace*, and on which thy final happiness depends! *But now*, alas, *they are hid from thine eyes*, and God will leave thee in his righteous judgment to this affected ignorance and obstinate perverseness, till it end in thine utter ruin. *For* the time hastens on, and in a little while *the days shall come upon thee, when* thou shalt suffer all the hardships of the closest siege, and *thine enemies shall draw a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and press thee in on every side*[b], so that with all thy numerous inhabitants thou neither shalt be able to resist nor to escape them: *And they shall level thee with the ground* on which thou standest, *and* crush *thy children within thee* under

41 held the city, and wept over it.

42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

44 And shall lay thee even with the ground,

[a] *O that thou hadst known.*] It is certain (as we have observed elsewhere, *note* a, on Luke xii. 50. Vol. VI. p. 586) that the *particle* εἰ is sometimes used to express *an ardent wish* (compare Numb. xxii. 29. and Josh. vii. 7. *Septuag.*) and the connection here will very well bear it. If our *translation* be retained, it must be acknowledged that the *broken manner of speaking* is very emphatical: *our Lord* will then seem to pause in a silent reflection on the happy consequences that would have attended their obedient regard to his invitations and addresses.—But to add the words [*it had been well*], which some have proposed, would rather enervate than help the sense; as I think it would do in most of the passages which learned critics have produced from the Greek writers as instances of a like figure of speech. See Mr. *Hallet on Script.* Vol. I. p. 11.

[b] *Thine enemies shall—compass thee round*, &c.] *Josephus* says expressly, that though it was thought a great and almost impracticable work to *encompass the city* with a wall, yet Titus animating his soldiers to attempt it, they in *three days* surrounded it with a wall of *thirty-nine furlongs* in circumference, with *thirteen castles* in its circuit; and by this means all hope was cut off that any of the Jews within the city should escape. (*Bell. Jud.* lib. v. cap. 12 [al. 13], § 1, 2.)—He also tells us, that when Titus had taken the city, and contrary to his will the temple was consumed with fire, he caused the *foundations* both of the temple and the city to be dug up and *levelled with the ground*, leaving only *three towers* and part of the *wall* to be a specimen of its former strength and grandeur: (*Bell. Jud.* lib. vii. cap. 1 [al. 18], § 1.) And afterwards the whole was so entirely destroyed that *not one stone* was *left upon another*; as *Socrates* relates, *Hist. Eccl.* lib. iii. cap. 20.—In short, the accomplishment of every part of *this prediction* is recorded by *Josephus* in so affecting and particular a manner, especially in the *Sixth Book* of his *Jewish War*, that I cannot but recommend the perusal of it to every Christian who has an opportunity of reading it.

ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another: because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

under thy ruins; *and shall not leave* so much as *one stone upon another in thee* of all thy splendid and sacred structures: and all these terrible calamities shall overwhelm thee, *because thou didst not know* and consider *the* appointed *season of thy* merciful *visitation*, nor attend to those overtures of grace which I have so often made in person to thee, and have still urged with so much seriousness and tenderness. SECT. CXLVII. Luke XIX. 44

MAT. XXI. 10.—[And Jesus entered into Jerusalem:] and when he was come, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? [MARK XI. 11.]

And Jesus entered into Jerusalem with great solemnity, amidst the joyful acclamations of the people; *and as he made his entrance* in such a public and remarkable way, *the whole city was in a* great *commotion* at so uncommon an appearance, *saying*, *Who is this* that comes in all this pomp, and is attended with these high congratulations? Mat. XXI. 10,

11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus the Prophet, of Nazareth of Galilee.

And the multitude that came with him *said*, *This is Jesus the* great *Prophet*, who is *of Nazareth in Galilee*, even he that is so celebrated all over the country for the fame of his doctrine and miracles. 11

12 And Jesus went into the temple of God, and [when he had looked round about upon all things,] [LUKE, began to] cast out all them that sold, and [LUKE,

And Jesus having come into the city by the eastern gate, alighted from the colt, and *went* directly *into the temple of God*, whither the people followed him: *and when he had looked round about*, and made his observation *upon all things* there[c], as he perceived those profanations were again renewed which he had formerly so solemnly chastised soon after he entered on his public ministry, *he began* with a holy indignation to animadvert upon them, as he had done three years before[d], and *to drive out all them that sold* 12

c *When he had looked round about upon all things.*] It is plain from this expression of St. Mark, that Jesus, when he *went into the temple* on the day of his public entry, took particular *notice* of *all things* there; which it is hardly probable that he would do without reforming the abuses with which the Jews so shamefully profaned it; and Matthew so expressly joins his *driving out the traders* with the transactions of *this day*, that howsoever it appears from several instances that the *evangelists* are not always exact in observing the *order of time*, it is highly reasonable to suppose that *Jesus purged the temple* on *this day*. Yet it appears so evident from Mark's account (ver. 12—17.) that the *traders were driven out* on the *next day*, when Christ returned from Bethany to the temple, after he had *cursed the fig-tree*, that I cannot but suppose with Mr. *Whiston* (in his *View of the Harmony*, p. 130, 131.) that this occurrence happened *twice*: and therefore I have only given here what Matthew and Luke relate of this matter, reserving Mark's account to the *next day*: (see sect. cl. *note* a, on Mark xi. 15.) Though, after all, I dare not be confident in a case where the greatest *critics* are so much divided in their sentiments.

d As he had done three years before.] I see no reason to wonder at the *repetition* of such an action as this, or to imagine that John would have placed *this story* so early in his history as he does, if it had not happened *then* as well as *now*. (See John ii. 14—16, Vol. VI. p. 136, 137.) Some have observed a greater *severity* in *our Lord's* treatment of *those that sold doves* now than before, as he now *overthrew their seats*, whereas he formerly contented himself with ordering the owners to *take them away* (John ii. 16.) but I will not answer for the solidity of the remark.

SECT. CXLVII.

Mat. XXI. 12.

sold and bought in the outer-court of *the temple*, which was appointed for the Gentile proselytes to worship in, but was made use of by the Jews as if it were a common market-place; *and* with an irresistible authority he *overthrew the tables of the exchangers of* foreign *money* into the current coin, which those that came from distant parts might want to offer for the service of the sanctuary (see Exod. xxx. 13, 14.) *and* likewise overturned *the seats of them that sold doves* for

[LUKE, them that] bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves: [MARK XI.—11.—LUKE XIX. 45.]

13 sacrifices. *And he said to them* as he turned them out, Such practices as these profane the house of God, and shamefully pervert the use for which it was designed; for *it is written* (Isa. lvi. 7.) *My house shall be called an house of prayer* for all people, to which they shall resort for the performance of religious worship: *but you have* turned it into an house of merchandise, and *made it* (as the prophet speaks, Jer. vii. 11.) *a den of robbers*[e], a place where traffic is carried on by persons of the most infamous character, who live by deceit and oppression, and practise the vilest extortion, even in the house of the righteous and blessed God. (Compare John ii. 14—16, sect. xxi. and Mark xi. 15, 17, sect. cl.)

13 And said unto them, It is written, My house [is, *and*] shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves. [LUKE XIX. 46.]

14 *And* there were many of *the blind and lame*[f], who had no sooner heard of his arrival in the city but they immediately desired to be led to the place where he was; and they *came to him in the temple, and he* graciously *healed them* in the presence of all the people.

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.

15 *But when the chief priests and scribes beheld the wonders he performed, and* observed how *the* very *children* were *crying out in the temple, and* continued the song which the multitude had begun, *saying*, "*Hosannah to the Son of David!* with joyful acclamations we congratulate his coming, and bid him welcome into the city of his royal father!" instead of being open to conviction,

15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased,

e *A den of robbers.*] Bishop *Smallbrooke* well observes (in his *Answer to Woolston*, Vol. I. p. 168.) that *our Lord* in this expression seems to allude to the custom which *robbers* in those parts had of sheltering themselves in *dens* and *caves* in the wilderness, where great multitudes of them often joined in sharing their plunder.

f *The blind and lame.*] Many such would, no doubt, be waiting in the several avenues of the temple, to ask alms at a time when there would be such a vast concourse of people: and there seems a peculiar propriety in *our Lord's* multiplying these astonishing *miracles*, both to vindicate the extraordinary act of authority he had just been performing, and to make this his last visit to Jerusalem as convincing as possible, that those who would not submit to him might be left so much the more inexcusable.

conviction, *they were filled with indignation* and resentment, *And they said to him, Dost thou hear what these* children *say?* and judge it proper to encourage these unthinking creatures in such language as this? *And Jesus says unto them, Yes,* I am sensible enough of what they say, nor is it needful or fit that I should reprove them for it. Are you unacquainted with the scriptures; you that would have the people to regard you as the great teachers of the law? or *have you never read* what David says, (Psal. viii. 2.) "*Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings* thou hast ordained that strength whereby *thou hast perfected* thine own *praise*, by the weakness of the instruments made use of in thy service[g]?" You cannot but have read it, and I assure you, that as God in many instances has used, and in a little while will eminently use, some of the weakest and meanest of mankind to accomplish his great and glorious purposes; so this event is a most signal illustration of those words; and it is by a secret influence of God on the minds of these little ones that they are led, as it were, to upbraid your silence and insensibility by so remarkable and suitable an exclamation.

SECT. CXLVII.

Mat. XXI. 16.

16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

And thus *he was* till the time of the passover, which was celebrated within five days after this[h], *teaching daily in the temple: but the chief priests, and the scribes, and* others of *the rulers of the people*, who had before decreed his death, according to the resolution which the sanhedrim had come to by the advice of Caiaphas (John xi. 53, sect. cxli.) were still contriving how they might execute their horrid design, and diligently *sought* an opportunity *to destroy him:* But they knew not how to effect it, *and could not* immmediately *find* out *what they might do* for that purpose, or what safe method they might take to seize him; *for all the* common *people listened to him with* so *great attention* and pleasure,

Luke XIX. 47.

Luke XIX. 47.—And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes, and the chief of the people, sought to destroy him;

48

48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

[g] *Out of the mouth of babes*, &c.] To *ordain strength*, which is the phrase the Psalmist uses in the passage here referred to, was in effect (as the *seventy* render it) to *perfect praise*; so that there is no need to be solicitous about that little variation in the *quotation*.—This general observation of David was greatly illustrated by the *Hosannahs* of these *children*; and yet much more by the triumph of the *apostles*, weak as in many respects they were, over all the opposition of Jews and Gentiles.

[h] Celebrated within five days after this.] This was the *first day of the week*, or our *Lord's-day*; in commemoration of which *Palm-sunday* was long ago denominated, and as ceremonies increased was particularly observed. The *passover* was celebrated by Christ on the *Thursday night* following, and he was crucified on *Friday*. Some transactions of each intervening day are marked in the following history.

[i] They

SECT. CXLVII.

sure, that they hung as it were on his lips while he spake[i], and pressed upon each other for an opportunity of hearing him. The magistrates therefore feared lest the populace should tumultuously rise in his defence, if they offered any public violence to him, and that thus they might endanger themselves while they sought to destroy Jesus.

Luke XIX. 48.

IMPROVEMENT.

Luke XIX. 41. NEXT to the sight of a *bleeding* and *dying Redeemer* there can surely be none in the whole world more affecting than this which is here represented; even *the Son of God weeping over perishing sinners;* yea, over the sinners of *Jerusalem.* We might, perhaps, have been ready to think that, foreseeing so circumstantially, as we know he did, all the ungrateful and inhuman treatment he was to meet with in this nest of murderers, with the scene of his sufferings, and the very *house of Caiaphas* in his full view[k], he should rather have *taken up a proverb* against it, and have anticipated the triumphs of that awful day when God would plead his cause with irresistible terror, and avenge the quarrel of his sacred blood. But behold, he seems to forget *himself,* and all his wrongs, great and cruel as they were; and in the midst of a *procession* intended for his honour, he *melts into tears,* as if it were for the calamity of a friend, or a brother; and says in the most genuine
42 language of undissembled grief, *Oh that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace!*

Behold, O our souls, with wonder and with awe, at once *the goodness* and *severity of God:* (Rom. xi. 22.) The sinners of
43, 44 *Jerusalem wept over,* and yet *abandoned to ruin!* We have our part
42 in all this: the tidings of the gospel are *the things which belong to our peace,* the things on which our everlasting happiness depends. Let us remember that the time will come in which, if we do not attend to them, they will be *hid from our eyes.* There is a limited *day* of mercy and grace; and therefore *to-day, while it is called to-day,* let us *hear his voice, and not harden our hearts* (Heb. iii. 15.) lest slighted *mercy* at length retire, and *vengeance* take

i They hung as it were on his lips while he spake.] This is the literal import of ἐξεκρεμάτο αὐτῦ ακουων. To render it, (as in a *late version*) *The populace were strongly attached to his doctrine,* is far from expressing the full sense.

k *House of Caiaphas* in his full view.] If we may credit the best accounts of Jerusalem which remain, this was exactly the case.—I cannot forbear referring my reader to Mr. *Howe's* excellent treatise, entitled, *The Redeemer's Tears wept over lost Souls;* in which, as in most of his practical works, there are such sublime and pathetic strokes of true, manly, and Christian eloquence, as do a great honour to the language and age in which they were written.

a *Some*

take its turn; *a vengeance* which will fall the heavier, and pierce the deeper, in proportion to all the *long-suffering* and *goodness* which have been exercised towards us in vain. Let all, and especially the *ministers* of *Christ*, learn compassion to souls by such an example; and when the strongest efforts of love prove ineffectual for their recovery, let us at least be *mourning* for them *before the Lord*, and *weeping over* the ruin which we cannot prevent. SECT. CXLVII.

Though *Christ* had *cleared the temple* from the profanations of these *traders* at the beginning of his ministry, he found the same pollutions returned at the close of it. And, alas, how often do we find it thus with respect to our hearts! How soon do those weeds spring up again which we had been endeavouring with a resolute hand to root up; and how often are efforts for reformation forgotten, even when the attempt appeared at first to be most necessary! Let us learn of *Christ* not to be *weary of well-doing*, but with continued zeal renew our endeavours again and again. Mat. XXI. 12.

The *scribes* and *Pharisees* envied *Christ;* but the *children* surround him with their *Hosannahs;* and he graciously accepts their feeble accents of praise, as *ordained* by God out of the *mouth of babes and sucklings.* Nor will he now *despise the day of small things.* Oh that we might have the pleasure to see *little children* pronouncing the name of *Christ* with reverence and love! And surely we who are *parents* must add, with a peculiar accent, Oh that *our own* may join in the choir! May they learn the *song* from our lips; and may our whole lives be one continued visible proof of the devotion and affection with which we present it! *Amen.* 15 16

SECT. CXLVIII.

Some Greeks that came to celebrate the passover at Jerusalem are introduced to Christ, who enters on an excellent discourse particularly suited to their circumstances; and retires in the evening to Bethany. John XII. 20—36. Mat. XXI. 17. Mark XI.—11.

JOHN XII. 20.

AND there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:

JOHN XII. 20.

AND among those that came up to Jerusalem from different countries *to worship at the feast, there were some Greeks,* or persons who were descended from Grecian parents, and used that language, but had forsaken the idolatry of their ancestors, and devoted themselves to the God of Israel [a]. *These therefore came to* 21 *Philip,* SECT. CXLVIII. John XII. 20.

21 The same came there-

a *Some Greeks*—who had devoted themselves to the God of Israel.] It is strange that such learned critics as Isaac Vossius and Salmasius should imagine these *worshippers* to have been *idolatrous Gentiles.* Dr. Whitby, and several other considerable writers,

SECT. CXLVIII.

John XII. 21.

Philip, who was of Bethsaida, a city *of Galilee*[b], *and asked* it as a favour of *him* to introduce them to his Master, *saying*, in a very respectful manner, *Sir, we* earnestly *desire to see* and hear this *Jesus* of Nazareth, of whom we have been told such extraordinary things, and who has now been received into the city with such unusual regard.

therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

22 Upon this *Philip comes and tells* what their request was to *Andrew*, who likewise was of Bethsaida, and had been first acquainted with Christ (John i. 40, 44, sect. xxi. xxii.) *and then Andrew and Philip*, having agreed upon it, went and *told Jesus* that some Greeks who were come to the feast desired admittance to him.

22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again, Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

23 *And Jesus* immediately ordered them to be brought to him; and as they were approaching him, he *answered them, saying*[c], At length *the hour is come*, and the appointed time is just at hand, *that the Son of man must be glorified*; and I would have you look on the approach of these Greeks as an earnest of the flowing in of all the Gentiles to me. But wonder not if my death is to precede it; for *verily, verily, I say unto you*, and assure you of it as a most solemn and important truth, That *unless a grain of wheat fall to the ground, and die* and waste away there, *it remains* single and *alone, but if it* seem to *die* and wither after it is sown, such is the principle of vegetation which it contains, that a new production

23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone: but

writers, have indeed thought that they were such as are commonly called *proselytes of the gate*, that is (as most readers well know), persons who, having renounced idolatry, and being worshippers of the *God of Israel*, might, according to the law of Moses, be permitted to dwell in Judea, and to converse among the Jews, though not with entire freedom. And it has likewise been thought, that the regard which Jesus shewed to such, in vindicating the *Court of the Gentiles* (where they assembled for religious worship) from the contemptuous profanations of the Jews, (Mat. xxi. 12, 13, p. 164.) might dispose these pious persons to address themselves to him.—But their attending at the *passover* leads me rather to imagine (with *Arndius*, *Miscel. Sac.* p. 6.) that they were what the *rabbies* now call *proselytes of righteousness*, that is, such as by *circumcision* obliged themselves to observe the whole law: (compare Acts ii. 5. viii. 27. xiii. 43.) Yet I will not venture confidently to affirm it.

[b] *Bethsaida of Galilee.*] This town lay on the borders of Syrophœnicia, from whence (as Grotius thinks) these Greeks might come; so that they might, perhaps, be acquainted with Philip as a neighbour; or otherwise we cannot say why this circumstance relating to him is here mentioned.—The learned *Reland* argues, that there were *two Bethsaida's*, of which *this* lay most to the *north*. See *Reland. Palestin.* p. 653.

[c] *Jesus answered them, saying.*] The *phrase* here intimates the *suitableness* of the following discourse to this particular occasion, by attending to which many of the beauties of it will be discovered. *Our Lord* might, perhaps, enlarge on some of these hints; and if his hearers took a due notice of them, and made a proper report on their return home, it might prepare the way for the *apostles*, when they came by their preaching more fully to unfold and illustrate these important doctrines.

[d] *If*

but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

duction of the like kind arises, and *it brings forth much fruit.* And so it is that I myself shall fall, and a new scene be opened, in which my kingdom shall seem to be utterly lost and gone; yet, like the spring corn, it shall assuredly revive, and appear beautiful and fruitful.

SECT. CXLVIII.

John XII. 24.

25 He that loveth his life, shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal.

But, in the mean time, such difficulties are also to be expected by my faithful servants, that it is but fit I should inform these strangers of what I have once and again told you; that *he who loves his* own *life* too well to part with it for my sake, *shall lose it*, and expose himself to death in the worst and most dreadful sense of the word; *but he that* acts as if he *hates his life in this world*, by exposing it to the greatest dangers in the cause of my gospel, *shall preserve it* even *to everlasting life*, and secure a state of immortal glory and happiness. (Compare Mat. x. 39, sect. lxxvi. Mark viii. 35, sect. lxxxix. and Luke xvii. 33, sect. cxxviii.)

25

26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour.

If any man therefore would engage to *serve me* as one of my loyal people, *let him* resolve to *follow me* whithersoever I shall lead him, whatever dangers and difficulties may lie in the way; *and* let him know, for his encouragement, that *where I am*, or where I shortly am to take up mine abode, *there shall also my* faithful *servant be;* for I will assign him an inheritance in that blessed world where I am for ever to rest and reign after all the sufferings I have endured here: *and* I assure you that, among all that follow me, *if any man*, of whatever nation he be, or whatever his religious profession may before have been, will faithfully *serve me*[d] here, *him will* [*my*] *Father* also *honour*, and confer such rich rewards upon him as to make him for ever both great and happy.

26

27 Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but

Having said this, our Lord paused for a while, and entered on a deep contemplation of the very different views of things which lay before him. And then he added aloud, *Now is my* very *soul* distressed and *troubled* in an affecting view of my approaching sufferings; *and what shall I say?* What petition shall I offer to God on this occasion? Shall I say, *Father, save me from this*

27

[d] *If any man serve me.*] *Our Lord*, by this *indefinite expression*, strongly intimates that *his kingdom* was to be of a very *extensive nature;* and that not only the *proselytes of righteousness*, but *those of the gate*, and indeed even the *idolatrous Gentiles* themselves, might, on their believing the gospel, be admitted into it.

[e] *Wha*

SECT. CXLVIII.

John XII. 27.

this dreadful *hour*, and from all the agonies which I am to endure in the gloomy season before me[e]? Nay, *but for this cause* was I born into the world, and for this end *I came* even *to this* present *hour*, that I might bear the sufferings on which I am entering, and might redeem

28 my people by them. And far be it from me to draw back from such engagements and undertakings: I will therefore much rather say, *Father, glorify thine own name*, and dispose of me, and all my concerns, in such a way as may most effectually answer that great end!

Then, at that very instant while he was speaking, *there came a voice from heaven* [*which said*], *I have both* already *glorified* [*it*] by the whole of thy ministry thus far; *and I will glorify* [*it*] yet *again* in a more signal manner by what farther remains before thee.

29 *The multitude therefore who stood by and heard* [*it*], though not all in a manner equally distinct, were perfectly astonished at the awful sound; and some among them *said, That it thundered*[f]: while *others*, who were nearer, *said*, That *an angel spake to him* from heaven.

30 But *Jesus answered and said* to his disciples, who stood near, and distinctly heard it, *This voice* from heaven *came not* chiefly *for my sake*, who was before assured of the affection of my Father, and knew the purpose he had formed to glorify himself by me; *but* it was uttered *for yours*, that you may not be offended at the treatment I shall meet with, and quit your hope in me, and regard for me, on account of any of the sufferings

31 which are coming upon me. This indeed is a very critical and important time; for *now is the judgment*

but for this cause came I unto this hour.

28 Father, glorify thy name.—

—Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.

29 The people therefore that stood by, and heard *it*, said, That it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

31 Now is the judgment

[e] *What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?*] I suppose few need be told that the *pointing* of the *New Testament* is far less ancient than the *text*. It is agreeable to observe how many difficulties may be removed by varying it, and departing from the common *punctuation*: of which I take *this* to be one of the most remarkable instances. For as the *text* does not oblige us to it, it does not seem natural to suppose that *our Lord* actually offered this petition, and then immediately retracted it again.

[f] *Said that it thundered.*] *Thunder* often attended *a voice from heaven*: (see Exod. xix. 16, 19. Rev. iv. 5. vi. 1. x. 3.) In allusion to which, perhaps, the *voice* itself was called by the ancient Jews *Bath Kol*, or *the daughter of the voice*, being ushered in with *thunder*, and, as it were, produced from it. *Elsner* has shewn that the *Heathens* reckoned that *sudden thunder* was a sign that a prayer then offered met with the most favourable regard. See *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 334, 335.)—Dr. *Lightfoot* observes here *(Hor. Heb. in loc.)* that Christ had *thrice* the testimony of *a voice from heaven*; first, when he entered on his public ministry, as the High-priest of our profession, at his baptism (Mat. iii. 17.) and then a second time, when a command was given to hear him, as the great Prophet of the church at his transfiguration, (Mat. xvii. 5.) and now again, when he had made his public entry into Jerusalem, as a King.

[g] *Now*

ment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

judgment of this world[g], which I am going to conquer and condemn, that by my death my followers may both be taught and enabled to triumph over it, and those may be convinced of sin that believe not in me: (compare Gal. i. 4. and John xvi. 8, 9.) Yea, *now shall* Satan, *the ruler* and god *of this world, be cast out* from that empire which he has so long usurped over the minds of men, and especially over the heathen nations. (Compare Eph. ii. 2. and 2 Cor. iv. 4.) SECT. cxlviii. John XII. 31.

32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

And when I am lifted up from the earth[h], though I may seem thereby to be made the trophy of mine enemies, yet such shall be the effect of that important event, that *I shall* thereby *draw all men to me*; that is, I shall lay a foundation for conquering the most stubborn hearts by so rich a display of my love; and shall by a secret, but powerful, influence on their minds, persuade multitudes of all ranks and all nations to list themselves under the banner I raise. (Compare John iii. 14, 15. Vol. I. p. 147, 148.) 32

33 (This he said, signifying what death he should die.)

Now this he spake of his being lifted up from the earth, as *signifying by what death he should die*, even by crucifixion, in which the person suffering was lifted up on high, and hung as it were between heaven and earth. 33

34 The people answered him, We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?

And in general it was understood by the people as implying some violent death shortly to come upon him. *The multitude* therefore *answered him, We have heard* it taught as a certain truth *out of the law*, or out of the volume of our sacred writings, *that the Messiah* is immortal, and *abides for ever*, "that his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion continues unto all generations," (2 Sam. vii. 16. Psal. lxxxix. 29. cx. 4. Isa. ix. 7. Ezek. xxxvii. 25. Dan. ii. 44. vii. 14.) *and how* then *dost thou*, who now plainly 34

[g] *Now is the judgment of this world.*] Mr. *Massey*, renders this (in his *Vernac. Sacra*, p. 8, 9) *Now is this world come to its crisis*: and *Grotius* and *More* (in his *Theological works*, p. 207.) explain it of the *redemption of the world*, or its vindication from the bondage of Satan. But this is so unusual a sense of the word, that I choose, with Dr. Whitby, to understand it of the *condemnation of the world*, or of the *judgment* passed upon its wicked principles and practices, and of the *victory* which Christians were to gain over it in consequence of the death of Christ. See John iii. 18, 19, xvi. 8, 11.

[h] *When I am lifted up from the earth.*] I think Dr. Whitby's *note* on this text sufficiently vindicates *this version* of ἐαν ὑψωθω. See the *Greek version* of Deut. vii. 1. Judges vi. 3. xxi. 21. 2 Sam. vii. 12. 1 Kings xiii. 31. Job vii. 4. Prov. iii. 24. iv. 12. Jer. iii. 16. and compare John xiv. 3. 1 John iii. 2. and 3 John, ver. 10. where ἐαν ἐλθω may signify, *when I come*.

SECT. CXLVIII. plainly professest thyself to be the Messiah, *say that the Son of man must be lifted up* from the earth, and die a violent death? *Who is this Son of man?*[1] Is he, as such language as this might seem to intimate, a different person from the Messiah, whom we have been taught to expect under the title of the Son of man? This was said by some of the multitude who were ill-affected towards him, and desired to find something to object against him.

John XII. 34.

35 *Then Jesus said to them,* Do not cavil at what I now say; but remember how short this opportunity is which, through the Divine goodness, you now enjoy: *yet a little while is the light with you,* which you may derive from me, or my servants who shall come to you in my name; *walk* therefore *while you have the light;* comply with the gracious purposes of God in making these discoveries to you, and regulate your temper and conduct by them; *that darkness may not overtake you,* that you may not be deprived of the gospel, and left in a night of ignorance and misery: *for* you know it is a most uncomfortable thing for a traveller to be benighted in his way, as *he that walks in darkness* wanders from place to place, and *knows not whither he goes,* or into what dangers he may fall the very next step he takes; and much more dreadful will it be for you to be deserted of God, and left to the darkness and folly of your own hearts. (Com-

36 pare John xi. 9, 10. sect. cxxxix.) Let me therefore once more seriously and kindly exhort you, that *while you have the light* thus clearly shining around you, you *believe in the light,* and honestly follow it, *that you may be the children of light,* who, being now truly wise and good, shall be the heirs of holiness, glory, and joy everlasting.

35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you: walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.—

These things Jesus spake when the Greeks applied themselves to him; *and* as the unbelieving Jews were greatly irritated by the actions and discourses of the day, and would not be awakened to conviction, he *left them, and departed* thence

— These things spake Jesus, [and he left them,] and departed, [MARK, and now the even tide was come,

[1] *Who is this Son of man?*] A writer of great note interprets this as if they had said, "Who is this that so absurdly, and inconsistently with the prophets, speaks of himself as the *Son of man,* while he talks of being *lifted up,* and dying?" (See Dr. *Sykes of Christianity,* p. 110.) But the sense given in the *paraphrase* appears to me more natural, and I am pleased to find it in Grotius. This was a real and important difficulty; but it was fit some obscurity should for the present be left upon it, lest the plainness of the *prediction* should have prevented its accomplishment. *Our Lord* therefore gave the discourse a useful turn, and a few days more proclaimed the mystery which he had before revealed to his *apostles* in private when he set out on his last journey to Jerusalem. (See Mat. xx. 18, 19. sect. cxlii.)

come, he went] [out of the city unto Bethany] [MARK, with the twelve;] [and he lodged there,] and did hide himself from them. [MAT. XXI. 17. MARK XI.—11.]

thence to a retired place: *and when now it was late in the evening, he* privately *went out of the city to Bethany, with* none to attend him but *the twelve* apostles; *and,* knowing that his enemies were watching to destroy him, and might have attempted to seize him by night if he had tarried at Jerusalem, *he lodged there* at Bethany, *and concealed himself from them,* to avoid the assaults of their deliberate malice till his hour was come. SECT. CXLVIII. John XII. 36.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHO can wonder at the desire these *Greeks* expressed to *see* so celebrated a Person as *Jesus* was! We hope there was something more than mere curiosity in it, and that at length they saw him with believing eyes, and, according to his prediction, *glorified him* by a cordial acceptance of his gospel.—His *disciples*, we see were ready to introduce them: and surely every faithful *minister of Christ* will undertake the task with pleasure when he sees souls awakened by Divine grace, and inquiring after *Jesus* with affectionate concern. Ver. 20, 21 23 22

Blessed be God, it has already, in many instances, been seen that by the *death of Christ* an *immortal seed* was sown, which has multiplied in all ages, and is still multiplying: Oh that it might have a greater *increase!* One would think that words so gracious as these should promote that *increase*, and operate upon every heart to produce *a love* to him sufficient to conquer every danger and opposition which may be met with in his cause: behold the *promise* which he has left upon record; "*If any man*, be he ever so mean and unworthy, will but faithfully *serve and follow me*, whatever his former wanderings and rebellions may have been, *where I am, there shall also my servant be.*" Happy state indeed! not only, like these *Greeks*, to have a transient sight of *Christ*, but to be *for ever with him!* 24 25 26

How admirable is the love and stedfastness of our *Redeemer*, who procured so great a happiness for us at so dear an expence! and even when his innocent *soul was troubled* in the view of his *sufferings*, instead of declining them, met them with joy! How should it animate us to renew that general comprehensive *petition*, than which none can be more suitable to us with regard to all the divine dispensations; *Father, glorify thine own name!* Glorify thyself, *O Lord!* and to that great end dispose of us as thou pleasest; for we should abhor ourselves if we had any interest separate from thine! 27 28

We may be assured, as certainly as by *a voice from heaven*, that

SECT. CXLVIII. this great end shall be answered; and in this we should rejoice. Behold, *the prince of this world is cast out!* Behold, *Satan*, is vanquished by *Christ!* and *Jesus is lifted up* on the cross for a standard to all the nations. Behold the attractive magnet by which *all men* are to be *drawn*, by which all his chosen people shall be brought to him, and so raised up to heaven itself! Let us *look unto him from the ends of the earth*, and labour with our cold hearts to awaken them to that lively and ardent affection which we owe to him who was *crucified for us*.

31, 32

35, 36 For ever adored be Divine grace for this *gospel light* which discovers to us so excellent an object! May we use it to saving purposes, and so *walk in it*, as that we may appear *to be the children of light!* Let us think of that last distribution of mankind, when *the children* and heirs *of light* and *darkness* are once for all to be separated. Let us think of the gloom of eternal *night*, which will shortly overtake those by whom the gospel is now despised; and remember how much it will be aggravated by the *light* we have so long seen. Do thou, *O God*, at whose word *light* arose out of darkness, *send forth* by thine influences on our hearts *thy light and thy truth*, that they may *lead and bring us to thine holy hill*, (Psal. xliii. 3.) and that we may have the satisfaction of *knowing whither we go*, even when *we walk through the* dark *valley of the shadow of death*. (Psal. xxiii. 4.)

SECT. CXLIX.

John's reflection on the infidelity of the Jews. As Christ was returning the next morning to Jerusalem, he curses the barren fig-tree. John XII. 37—43. Mat. XXI. 18, 19. Mark XI. 12—14.

JOHN XII. 37.

SECT. CXLIX. NOW such was the perverseness of the Jews and such the prejudice they had conceived against our Lord, that though he had sufficiently John XII. 37. declared himself to be the true Messiah, and *though he had done so many* undeniable and glorious *miracles* at this and other times *before them*, in their most public places and most numerous assemblies, *yet* the greater part of them were hardened in their infidelity, and, notwithstanding all that he had said and done, they were in general so obstinate, that *they did not believe on* 38 *him* as the Messiah. *So that the saying of Isaiah the prophet was* plainly *fulfilled* and verified

JOHN XII. 37. BUT though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might

might be fulfilled which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

fied in them[a], *which he spake* in the name of Christ and of his servants, referring expressly to the gospel times (Isa. liii. 1) "*Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been* so effectually *revealed* or made bare[b], as to conquer those strong prejudices which men have entertained against thine appointed method of salvation?" SECT. cxlix. John XII. 38.

39 Therefore they could not believe because that Esaias said again,

40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

And, *for this reason, they were* now in a manner utterly *incapable of believing, because* many of them having long wilfully opposed the most sufficient and proper methods of conviction, were at length given up by God to a judicial hardness and blindness; [*as*] the same prophet *Isaiah says elsewhere* (Isa. vi. 10.) "Having refused to hearken to the voice of God, *he has* in righteous judgment *blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart*[c], *lest they should* (as he adds in the name of God) *see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal* and save *them*, which, after such obstinate perverseness, I am determined that I never will." (Compare Mat. xiii. 14, 15. Vol. VI. p. 343. and Acts xxviii. 27.) 39 40

41 These things said Esaias

These things Isaiah spake when he saw his glory[d], even 41

[a] *So that the saying of Isaiah was fulfilled.*] It is apparent (as the late judicious Mr. *Jeffrey* has observed in his *True Grounds*, &c. p. 110) that the accomplishment of *this prophecy* could not be *the end* they proposed to themselves in their *unbelief*; and consequently that the expression ἵνα πληρωθῇ must be rendered as it is here: which may be applied to several other passages; and shews, by the way, how precarious that remark of Mr. Pierce is by which he would make *that phrase* an argument, that the *scripture* introduced by it is quoted, not in any instance by way of *accommodation*, but always according to its original design and *literal* meaning.

[b] *Hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?*] I apprehend *this phrase* may allude to the *habit* generally worn by the *easterns*, and especially by persons of rank, which was a long robe without sleeves; so that when *the arm* was stretched out to perform any action which required strength, it would appear *uncovered*. (Compare Isa. lii. 10.) In this connection it seems strongly to imply, that whenever true *faith* is produced in the mind, it is to be considered as the effect of a *Divine energy*. See Eph. i. 19. and Col. ii. 12.

[c] *He has blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart.*] As God is said to *harden the heart of Pharaoh* in one place, while in another it is said *he hardened his own heart* (Exod. ix. 12. and viii. 15, 32); and as we ought to be very tender of ascribing to God any thing that looks like a necessitating influence to impel men to sin, I apprehend that all we are here to understand by *God's blinding* and *hardening* these Jews is, that he permitted them to grow more and more prejudiced against the gospel, and, for wise reasons, acted in such a manner as he knew would in fact be abused by them to an increase of those prejudices. The learned, by consulting the *originals* of the places below, may see instances of a *phraseology* nearly resembling and illustrating this. Compare Lev. xiii. 3. Ezek. xiii. 19, 22. xiv. 9. xx. 25. Gen. xli. 13. Jer. i. 10. iv. 20. and Acts x. 15. where a person is said *to do* what he *permits*, or what he *declares* or *foretells*.—The *evangelist* in this *quotation* has not confined himself exactly to the words of the *prophet*, but the sense is plainly the same; and nothing was more usual with the Jews than to *quote scripture* in this way. See *Surenhusius, de Formulis allegandi*, p. 367.

[d] *When he saw his glory.*] These words seem so plainly to refer to Christ, that I cannot but approve the argument which the learned

SECT. CXLIX.

even the glory of Christ, who was then the Medium of the Divine manifestation, *and spake of him* and of his times in the awful words mentioned above, which had their terrible accomplishment in the men of this generation.

Esaias when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

John XII. 41.

42 *Nevertheless*, at this very time *there were many even of the rulers* themselves *who* were inwardly convinced that he was the Messiah, and *believed on him* as such, still expecting that he would by some surprising providence be raised to the throne of Israel; *but they did not* think it convenient as yet to *confess* the convictions of their own hearts concerning [*him*,] *on account of* the declared enmity of *the Pharisees* against him, *lest* by them *they should be cast out of the synagogue*, and be exposed to the great ignominy and secular detriment which necessarily attended such a sentence. *For they* were such thoughtless and mean-spirited creatures, that they *loved the praise of men more than the praise of God*; and durst not face the contempt of their fellow-mortals, even to secure the approbation of their Maker. (Compare John v. 44. Vol. VI. p. 265.) This was the state of things at Jerusalem, and this the effect of Christ's entrance into it, as related above.

42 Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also, many believed on him: but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.

43 For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Mark XI. 12

But though the malice of his enemies was known to Jesus, *and* he was sensible they were contriving to destroy him, yet *on the morrow-morning* he again set out with his disciples for Jerusalem: and *when they were come from Bethany, as he returned into the city, he was* very *hungry*; having come out early without eating, that he might neither incommode his friends, nor break in upon his secret or public devotions[c]. *And*

MARK XI. 12. And on the morrow [in the morning] when they were come from Bethany, [as he returned into the city,] he was hungry. [MAT. XXI. 18.]

learned Bishop *Pearson* draws from Isa. vi. 1. to prove that Christ was the Jehovah that spoke to the prophet. (*Pearson on the Creed*, p. 125.) Dr. *Clarke* indeed explains it of *seeing the Father's glory*: (*Script. Doct. of the Trin.* p. 58.) But it is difficult to say on that supposition what the *evangelist* intended by adding that clause [*and spake of him*]: and it would be quite unexampled to suppose that αὐτὸν has two such different significations in the same line as that the meaning should be, he saw *the Father's* glory, and spake of *the Son*. See *Vitringa* on Isa. vi. 1. p. 142, *& seq.*

the hospitable and most sensibly obliged family of Lazarus would otherwise have suffered Jesus to come out without eating; or that if he had eaten that morning he would have been so *hungry*, before he had walked *two miles*, as to go out of the way to *gather figs*. To me there appears an inexpressible charm in this oblique hint; it shews how little the *evangelists* were inclined to enter into panegyrics or reflections on the excellent character of their Master; and is a specimen of that simplicity and modesty which might, independent on other arguments, almost compel the assent of persons of a like temper to the wonderful story which they relate in so genuine and unaffected a manner.

[c] Might neither incommode his friends, nor break in upon his devotions.] This must certainly have been the reason of *our Lord's hunger*; for none can imagine that

[f] *Seeing*

13 And seeing a fig-tree [in the way] afar off, having leaves, he came [to it], if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing [thereon] but leaves [only]; for the time of figs was not *yet*. [MAT. XXI. 19.—]

SECT. CXLIX.

Mark XI. 13.

And as he was now *on the way, seeing a single fig-tree*[f] *at a* considerable *distance, which had* a fine spread of *leaves* upon it, and therefore appeared to be one of the earlier kind, *he went* up *to it*, [*to see*] *if he could find any thing upon it* to satisfy his hunger; *and when he came to it, he found nothing thereon but leaves only; for* there was not so much as any fruit in the bud; by which it plainly appeared that, though it looked so beautiful, it was a barren tree. Now it is to be observed that our Lord turned out of the way, because, as it was yet but early in the summer, *the time of* gathering *figs was not* [*yet*] come[g]; so that had this tree produced any, it might have been

[f] *Seeing a single fig-tree.*] Though in the first edition I had only followed Mark, and rendered it, *seeing a fig-tree*, I think upon farther consideration, that συκην μιαν, which is the expression Matthew uses here (though our translators make no difference) should have been rendered *a single fig-tree*, which I have now inserted in the *version*.

[g] *The time of figs was not* [*yet*] come.] I shall not trouble the reader with an account of all the strange *solutions* which have been given to the difficulty which immediately arises in the mind on reading this clause; nor with the particular reasons which may be offered against each. The best view of them all, that I can recollect, may be had by consulting *Witsius*, in his *Meletemata*; and I think the best *solution* may be seen in Mr. *Hallet's Notes and Discourses*, Vol. II. p. 114—124. It is certain, as he has there proved from incontestable authority, and we have observed elsewhere (*note* b, on Luke vi. 1. Vol. VI. p. 267), that the climate of Judea being abundantly warmer than ours, the *passover*, though never later than *April*, commonly fell at the beginning of their *harvest*, that is, of their *summer*, which is there vehemently hot, not only in *May*, but in *March* and *April* (in which last *this passover* probably fell): compare Josh. iii. 15. iv. 19. v. 10, 11. and 1 Chron. xii. 15. (See also Lev. xxiii. 15—17. compared with Exod. ix. 31, 32. and Ruth ii. 23.) Now it is equally certain that one, and that the most delicate kind of *figs*, was *ripe* in Judea at the beginning of *summer* (as we have a fine sort in England which are *ripe* before our harvest, having put out the autumn before, and stood the whole winter): see Hos. ix. 10. Mich. vii. 1. Nah. iii. 12. Jer. xxiv. 2. Cant. ii. 11—13. and Isa. xxviii. 4. And *the fig-tree opening its leaves*, which ever body knows do not appear till after the fruit, is spoken of as *a sign of approaching summer*, Mat. xxiv. 32. *Our Lord* therefore at this time might well expect to *find fruit* on this tree, since the *time of gathering* even these early *figs was not yet* come, which if it had, there would have been no room for the expectation, or the *curse* which followed it.—That καιρος συκων does not signify, as some have fancied, *a kindly season for figs*, but *the time of gathering* them in, I think the learned Bishop *Kidder* has abundantly proved. (See his *Demonstration of the Messiah*, § ii. p. 38, 39.) Compare Mat. xxi. 34. Mark xii. 2. and Numb. xiii. 23.—It is true this interpretation of the story, though incomparably easier than any other I know, will require a *transposition* of the clause before us, as if it had been said, *He came, if haply he might find any thing thereon; for the time of figs was not* yet; *and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves*. But no interpretation whatever can make the *last clause*, as we read it, *a reason* for what stands immediately before it, that *he found nothing but leaves*; for it is well known, that if our common *fig-trees* have no *young figs* on them in *March* or *April*, they can produce none that year. None can deny another *transposition* of the like kind in the same *evangelist*, Mark xvi. 3, 4. (sect. cxciv.) both of them probably being occasioned by an accidental *interlineation* in the *original*, and a mistake of some early *transcriber*, who did not bring in the *interlined clause* exactly in its due place. See instances of the like kind, Gen. xiii. 10. and Josh. xxii. 22.—And if with Heinsius, Knatchbull, and Gataker, we should here read ὃ instead of ὃς, and render it, *where he was it was the season of figs*, we must admit of the same *transposition*, and consequently should gain no advantage at all, by a *version* which (as all learned men know) is very harsh, and attended with an inelegancy and impropriety which this would be no proper place to examine.

[h] *And*

SECT. CXLIX.

been expected they would be growing still upon it. *And Jesus*, finding it to be a barren tree, that only made a promising appearance, but had produced no fruit, *said to it upon this occasion*[h], As thou art fruitless now, continue always so; *let no man from henceforwards ever eat fruit of thee, nor any fruit hereafter ever grow upon thee. And his disciples heard* [*it*], and took notice of the words; *and* as soon as he had spoken them (though his disciples, as they were passing on, did not observe it at that time), *the fig-tree immediately withered away;* Christ intending by that significant action to intimate that the curse of God should thus wither and destroy the Jewish nation, which he had before compared to an unfruitful fig-tree. (See Luke xiii. 6—9. sect. cxvi. p. 9.)

Mark XI. 14.

14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever: [Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.] And his disciples heard *it*; [and presently the fig-tree withered away.] [MAT. XXI.—19.]

IMPROVEMENT.

John xii. 37

How evidently necessary is the operation of Divine grace to conquer the *prejudices* of a sinful heart; since even the *preaching* of *Christ* himself, enforced by all his stupendous *miracles*, could not overcome those prejudices without it! And how cautious should sinners be that they do not *stop their ears* to the joyful
38—40 sound of the gospel, and *shut their eyes* against its glorious light; lest God should leave them to their own delusions, and in his righteous judgment *seal them up* under final blindness and impenitence! Then will they never *be converted and healed;* but die with that poison in all the faculties of their souls, which will make them for ever restless and miserable.

42 Can we find words sufficient to express the madness of these *Pharisees*, who, while they were in their consciences convinced that *Jesus was the Christ, would not confess* that conviction, and publicly pay their homage to him, *because they loved the praise of*
43 *men more than the praise of God?* Strange infatuation of the human mind! that it should be capable of believing *there is a God*, and yet of preferring the *creatures* before him; and should sometimes imagine the vain breath of popular applause or popular censure so considerable, as that God should be offended to please man; and all the honours and rewards of his heavenly presence lost, to secure a little regard from those who are perishing in their crimes,

[h] *And Jesus said to it upon this occasion.*] It is plain that in this place this must be the sense of that phrase, *Jesus answered and said.* Compare *note* [f], on Mat. xi. 25. Vol. VI. p. 311.

crimes, and will ere long be themselves the objects of *everlasting shame and contempt.* SECT. CXLIX.

May none of us ever indulge such a temper, or ever rest in an empty profession; lest, being like *the fig-tree* before us, *which had leaves,* but no *fruit,* the *curse of Christ* should be pronounced upon us, which would *immediately wither* us amidst all our verdure! Let us remember that this was intended as one of those significant actions by which the holy messengers of God frequently intimated approaching judgments. Happy would it have been if some, instead of searching out objections against it, had seriously considered its design, and the sad aspect with which it looks on those who, like them, *receive the grace of God in vain!* Mark xi. 13, 14. Mat. xxi. 10.

SECT. CL.

Christ, arriving at Jerusalem, visits the temple again; and, after a repeated effort to reform the continued abuses there, discourses with the people in a manner which further exasperates the priests; and in the evening goes out of the city. Mark XI. 15—19; John XII. 44. *to the end.*

MARK XI. 15.

AND they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves.

MARK XI. 15.

AND, soon after the fig-tree had been cursed, *they come to Jerusalem; and Jesus entering,* as he had done the day before, *into the temple,* observed, as he was passing through the court of the Gentiles, that the people who had polluted it by their traffic were seated there again; and being displeased to see that sacred place so shamefully profaned, he presently renewed his testimony against them, and *began to drive out them that sold and bought in* the limits of *the temple*[a], *and* SECT. CL. Mark XI. 15.

a *To drive out them that sold and bought in the temple.*] The time when this was done is fixed by Mark to the day after Jesus made his public entry into Jerusalem, and so (as was observed before, *note* c, on Mat. xxi. 12, p. 163) this must have been a *different fact* from that related by Matthew, which he has introduced on the preceding day, before the *shoutings of the children.* We have supposed it, therefore, to be *repeated* by *our Lord;* for as it is improbable that he would not *purge the temple* on the day of his triumphant entry, when Mark expressly says that *he looked round about upon all things;* so it is plainly intimated here that he did it after his return from Bethany on the next day. Nor is it at all unlikely that, after Jesus was *departed out of the city,* there would be people enough, if it were only out of opposition to him, who would be ready to encourage the *traders* (some of whom might, perhaps, be new comers) to return again to their places. And Jesus therefore seems (as Mr. *Whiston* has observed) to have asserted the regard that was due to the *temple* now with more severity and exactness than he had done the day before, *not suffering any one* so much as *to carry a vessel through the temple;* which is a circumstance not mentioned either by Matthew or Luke in their account of the transactions of the preceding day. (See sect. cxlvii.)—But I see no foundation at all for Mr. *Whiston's* conjecture, that on the

SECT. CI

and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and also *the seats of them that sold doves: And* he
Mark XI. 16. *permitted not that any one*, for the sake of shortening his way, *should carry any* burden or any kind of *vessel through* the courts of *the temple;* but strictly insisted on a due reverence to it, as a place that was entirely set apart to God's im-
17 mediate service *And he taught* them at large the evil of such practices; *saying to them, Is it not written* (as I observed but yesterday), "*My house shall be called an house of prayer*, and that not only for the Jews themselves, but (as the prophet says) *for* the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord, or for those pious proselytes who from *all* the neighbouring *nations* shall resort to it?" (Isa. lvi. 6, 7.) *But you have* turned it to another use, and *made it* in effect *a den of robbers*, by suffering people here to carry on their trades, and to profane the place in which the Gentiles are to worship God, by scandalous extortion and unlawful gain. (Compare Mat. xxi. 12, 13, and Luke xix. 45, 46, p. 133, 164.)

16 And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.

17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

John XII. 44. *And* then, as considerable numbers of people were now gathered about him, *Jesus cried*, or proclaimed with a loud voice, saying, Be it known unto you all, that in these extraordinary steps which I take for the reformation of abuses, and the vindication of God's house, I act by his own immediate direction and authority; and *he that* cordially *believes in me, believeth not in me* alone, *but in him that sent me*, and thereby
45 does an honour to the Father himself. *And he that sees me*, and regards me with a lively faith, *does* also in effect *see him that sent me*, as the perfections of the Father are displayed in me; whereas, he that shuts his eyes against me, excludes the only means of being brought to the
46 true knowledge of him. For, full of the inspiration of his blessed Spirit, *I am come a light into the world, that every one who* really *believes in me, might not* any longer *abide in darkness*, but might attain to the knowledge of all necessary truth, and the enjoyment of the most solid
47 and excellent happiness. *And if any one* of you *hear*

JOHN XII. 44. Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

45 And he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.

46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me, should not abide in darkness.

47 And if any man hear

the former day Christ drove them out of *the Jew's court*, and now out of that of *the Gentiles*; for it is no way probable that the *traders* were ever allowed to introduce their wares into the *inner-court*, for which the Jews had a peculiar reverence. See Mr. *Whiston's View of the Harmony*, p. 131, and Dr. *Whitby's note* on Mark xi. 17.

b *That*

hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

hear my words, which I am so frequently and freely speaking, *and will not believe* in me, *I do not* now *condemn him*, or immediately execute judgment upon him; *for* (as I formerly declared, John iii. 17, sect. xxvi.) *I am not come* at present *to condemn the world*, or to perform any work of wrath and terror, whatever ill usage I may meet with in it; *but* the design of my appearance is mild and gentle, and I am come *to save the world*, and to make its inhabitants happy for time and for eternity, if they will be so wise as to hearken to the proposals I offer.

sect. cl.

John xii. 47.

48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

Nevertheless, though I do not immediately judge any, yet *he that rejects me, and does not receive my words*, will not escape final condemnation, but will find, to his surprise and confusion, that he *has one that judges him*: for *the word that I have spoken*, though heard with indifference from day to day, is recorded in the book of God's remembrance; and as the time will come when the proposals I have made shall be reviewed, [*even*] *that* very word *shall judge him in the last* awful *day* [b], as the tenor of it is so excellent, that to have rejected it will prove a man ignorant of God, and alienated from true religion and goodness. 48

49 For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

For I have not spoken of myself, either on my own motion, or on any precarious conclusions drawn from principles divinely taught; *but the Father who sent me, he gave me* ample instructions, and *a* particular *commandment, what I should say, and what I shall* yet *speak* in that part of my work which is still before me. 49

50 And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

And I will faithfully conform myself to his instructions, whether men be pleased or offended with me; for *I know that his commandment is* of the greatest consequence, and that *eternal life* depends upon the knowledge and observance of it; and *therefore* I would by no means vary in a matter of so much importance; but *whatever I say* unto you, *I speak* it *just as the Father has given* it *me in charge*, and alter nothing 50

b *That* very word *shall judge him*, &c. [ο λογος ον ελαλησα, εκεινος κρινει αυτον.] *Our Lord*, by this manner of speaking, represents *his word* as a *person* that should sit in judgment upon unbelievers at the last day. (Compare Heb. iv. 12. But I can see no ground for Mr. *Fleming's* interpretation (*Christology*, Vol. I. p. 136), who would render it, *The Logos, which I have spoken of, shall judge him*; as if he had said, "Though it is not my present business to do it, yet I have a commission from my Father, which is hereafter to take place, when I shall appear worthy of that great name." I do not recollect that *our Lord* had given himself the title of *Logos* in any of his discourses with the Jews; and therefore can see no reason to suppose such a reference to it.

SECT. CI. nothing in the message he has sent me to deliver. So that the doctrine which I preach should be received as coming from the Father, and by rejecting it you will be guilty of despising his authority.

John XII. 50.

Mark XI. 18. Thus did our Lord continue to reform abuses, and to teach the people with the utmost seriousness and earnestness, on the second day of that week in which he suffered. *And the scribes and chief priests* were much offended when they *heard* [*of it*], *and* diligently *sought how they might* find out some expedient to *destroy him. for they* not only envied, but *dreaded him, because all the people were* visibly *struck* into attention and wonder *at his doctrine*, and seemed disposed to receive it with a respect proportionable to its importance and solemnity.

MARK XI. 18. And the scribes and chief priests heard *it* and sought how they might destroy him, for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

19 *And*, that he might give them no unseasonable advantages against him, *when the evening was come, he went out of the city*, and spent the night as he had done before, in a retired place with his disciples.

19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

IMPROVEMENT.

Mark XI. 15—17. How hard is it to purge a carnal heart, and disentangle it from the snares of a deceitful world! No sooner were these *traders driven from the temple*, but they *return* to it again; and are as busy the *next day* in the pursuit of their unlawful gain as they had been before. And thus how often are *convictions stifled* by the love of this world! And if the voice of conscience, or the word of God, may interrupt us for a while in our unlawful courses, yet where it may affect our worldly interest, how ready are we to return to them again! and with what difficulty are we brought so far to lay aside our earthly projects, as not to take them with us into the *house of God!* Purge us, *O Lord*, from every irregular desire; pursue and perfect thine own work; and *incline our hearts unto thy testimonies, and not unto covetousness!* (Psal. cxix. 36.)

John XII. 44, 45. Most important is that *proclamation* which *our Lord* made in the *temple*, and is still making to us in his word: *believing in him, we believe in the Father*; and *seeing him, we see the Father*. Let us be ready therefore to receive him out of regard to his Divine authority, as well as with a view to our own happiness; for without him we can have no access unto *the Father*, nor can we ever see him as a reconciled God.—The sacred *light* which he diffuses around him is not intended merely to amuse our eyes with pleasing speculations, but to animate our hearts with holy affections, and to *guide our feet into the way of peace*. (Luke i. 79.) If we desire

desire therefore to escape an *abode in* eternal *darkness*, and to see light everlasting, let us faithfully follow him: otherwise we are *condemned already*, and *that word which he spake* will become to us *a savour of death unto death* (2 Cor. ii. 16), and will *judge us in the last* solemn and dreadful *day*, when it shall sentence those who would not be saved by it. SECT. CL. Ver. 48

Let us now make *that word* the rule of our life which shall then be the rule of our judgment. We may most comfortably venture our eternal all on the exact veracity of it. *Christ* has perfectly fulfilled the *commission* he received from *his Father*, as one that was *faithful to him that appointed him*; and stands so completely approved in his sight, that our only hope is that we also may be accepted in him, and find mercy and grace for his sake. 49, 50

SECT. CLI.

Jesus returning to the city in the morning, his disciples observe that the fig-tree was withered away: being come into the temple, he confounds the members of the sanhedrim, who questioned his authority, and reproves them by the parable of the complaisant but disobedient son. Mat. XXI. 20—32. Mark XI. 20, *to the end*; XII. 1.— Luke XX. 1—9.—

MARK XI. 20.

AND in the morning, as they passed by, [when the disciples] saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots, [they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away!] [MAT. XXI. 20.]

MARK XI. 20.

NOW Jesus, having spent the night with his disciples in a retired place without the city, returned again to Jerusalem on the third day of the week in which he suffered: *and in the morning, as they were passing by* the spot of ground where he had cursed the barren fig-tree on the day before, *when the disciples saw the fig-tree*[a] *dried up from the* very *roots*, and so entirely stripped of its leaves that, though it stood at some distance from the road, they easily discerned the change, *they* were greatly struck at the sight, and *wondered, saying, How soon is the fig-tree* that stands yonder *withered away*, though yesterday it seemed so flourishing! *And Peter recollecting* what had passed, took notice of it to Jesus, and *said unto him, Rabbi, behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst* but yesterday, *is* now quite *withered away*. SECT. CLI. Mark XI. 20. 21

21 And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig-tree, which thou cursedst, is withered away.

And

[a] *When the disciples saw the fig-tree.*] Matthew relates this story of the *fig-tree*, as if the notice that the *disciples* took of it, and the account that Jesus gave them of the power of *faith*, followed immediately upon his cursing it. But Mark has so expressly referred the circumstances to the *next morning*, and so particularly mentions *Peter's recollecting* what had passed before, that it is plain *his order* must be followed here, which Matthew has neglected, that he might give us the whole of the story together.

[b] *Have*

SECT. cli.

Mark XI. 22.

And Jesus answering, says unto them, See that you *have* a stedfast *faith in God,* and a full confidence in his power and fidelity, when you feel him secretly moving on your spirits, to stir you
23 up to any miraculous operation[b]. *For I assuredly say unto you, That if you have* such a firm and stedfast *faith, and do not doubt* of God's being ready to stand by you, *you shall not only do* such miracles as *this of the fig-tree, but also* shall perform far greater things; yea, *whosoever,* under such an impulse, and with such a believing temper, *shall* attempt any thing as difficult and extraordinary, as if he were to *say to this mountain* which we are now crossing, *Be thou removed* from hence, *and thrown into the* distant *sea; and shall not* at all *doubt in his mind, but* stedfastly *believe that what he says shall come to pass, it shall* accordingly *be done,* [*and*] *shall be to*
24 *him just as he says. And for this reason,* to encourage you boldly to act as God shall direct and instigate you, *I say unto you,* That *whatsoever things you shall desire,* [*and*] *ask* of God *in prayer,* to make it manifest that you are sent of him, and to confirm your doctrine; if you *believe that you* shall actually *receive them,* however difficult the things may be that you request, yet in such circumstances they shall certainly be done, *and you shall have them.*
25 But still I would subjoin one caution; that if you expect your prayers should prevail with God, you must take care to offer them in love as well as in faith; *and when you stand praying*[c], in

22 And Jesus answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God: [MAT. XXI. 21.—]

23 For verily I say unto you, That [if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig-tree; but also] whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass: [it shall be done, *and*] he shall have whatsoever he saith. [MAT. XXI.—21.]

24 [And] therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire [*and* shall ask in prayer] believe that ye receive *them,* and ye shall have *them,* [MAT. XXI. 22.]

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if

b *Have faith in God,* &c.] It is certain that the attempt of *performing miracles* in public was a remarkable instance of *faith* in the Divine power and fidelity; for they were generally introduced by some solemn *declaration* of what was intended, which was in effect a prediction of immediate success: (so Peter says, Acts iii. 6. *In the name of Jesus Christ, Rise up and walk;* ix. 34. *Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole;* and again, ver. 40, *Tabitha, Arise.*) And in pronouncing this the person speaking pawned all his credit as a messenger from God, and consequently all the honour and usefulness of his future life, on the immediate *miraculous energy* to attend his words, and to be visibly exerted on his uttering them. And hence it is that such a firm courageous *faith* is so often urged on those to whom such *miraculous powers* were given.—But what kind of *intimation* of God's intended miraculous interposition the *apostles* in such cases felt on their minds, it is impossible for any, without having experienced it, to know. It is therefore an instance of their wisdom, that they never pretend to describe it, since no words could have conveyed the idea.

c *When you stand praying.*] There is no room to doubt that *standing* was their usual posture when they *prayed;* as Dr. *Lightfoot* observes with respect to the Jews (*Hor. Heb.* on Mat. vi. 5.) and the learned author of the *Inquiry into the Worship of the Primitive Church* (chap. ii. § 1.) has shewn it to be the practice of the first ages of the Christian church. (Compare Mat. vi. 5. and Luke xviii. 11.) But as the word [*stand*] has no particular significancy here, I might have omitted it in the *translation* as the *Prussian editors* have frequently done, but that I do not choose to multiply *expletives* in the sacred writings.

d *It*

SECT. cli.

if ye have ought against any; that your Father also which *is* in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

in the presence of that Majesty of heaven whom you have offended by so many provocations, you should *forgive, if you have any matter* of complaint *against any; that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.* Mark XI. 25.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which *is* in heaven forgive your trespasses.

26 *But if you do not forgive* even your most cruel enemies, and much more your offending brethren, *neither will your Father in heaven forgive* you *your trespasses:* (compare Mat. vi. 14, 15. xviii. 35.) And if your trespasses be not forgiven, you have little reason to hope for such extraordinary interpositions in answer to your prayers; or if those interpositions were to be granted, you would receive no manner of advantage from them, while amidst all the glory of working the most amazing miracles you lay under the load of guilt and condemnation.

27 And they come again to Jerusalem: and [when he was come into the temple], [LUKE, it came to pass, that] as he was walking, [LUKE, as he taught the people, and preached the gospel,] there [LUKE, came upon him] the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders [of the people]; [MAT. XXI. 23.—LUKE XX. 1.]

27 *And* after Jesus had been thus discoursing with his disciples by the way, *they come again to Jerusalem: and when he was come into the temple, it came to pass, that as he was walking* there [d], *while he taught the people* who flocked around him, *and* zealously *preached the gospel* of the kingdom to all that were desirous to be instructed in it, *the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people* [e], who were contriving his destruction, *came upon him* in a body, with a strong desire to confound and overbear him: *and* they *spake to him* in such a manner, as to express their high displeasure at what had lately passed,

[f] LUKE XX. 2 And spake unto him, saying, Tell

Luke XX. 2.

[d] *It came to pass, that as he was walking.*] Luke, who tells this, as he does several other stories, in a less circumstantial manner, says it was *on one of those days:* but the insertion of that clause here would have been improper, considering how particularly the date of this fact is fixed by Mark. If the reader should happen elsewhere to meet with the *omission* of a word or two in any of the *evangelists* (which he very seldom will), I hope he will not condemn it till he reflect whether it may not be accounted for in the same manner.

[e] *The chief priests—and the elders of the people.*] These are *titles* that frequently occur, but it is not easy to fix a determinate idea to them.—By the *chief priests*, I think we may understand any peculiar distinction in the *Aaronic family:* so that it may include the *high priest*, his deputy or *sagan*, any of the *heads* of the *twenty-four courses* of priests who might happen to be in waiting, and likewise any of those whom the Talmudists called Catholicin, Amarcalin and Memunnim, who (if their testimony may be credited) were appointed to preside over the other *priests* and *Levites*, and to regulate the *watch*, the *singers*, &c. A summary account of them may be seen in *Reland. Antiq. Heb.* part ii. cap. iii. § 4, 5.—By the *elders of the people*, some would understand those representatives who were called *Viri Stationarii*, that were appointed to attend in their courses at the hours of *morning* and *evening sacrifice* in the name of the whole Israelitish nation; but I rather suppose it may signify the *members* of the grand *sanhedrim*, to whom that title most eminently and properly belonged; which is the more probable, as *they* were the persons under whose cognizance the late action of Christ in *purging the temple* would most naturally fall. These, with the persons above-mentioned, probably appeared in a considerable company on purpose to daunt him, and to bear an united testimony against him, if any thing exceptionable should fall from him on this occasion.

SECT. CLI.

Luke XX. 2.

passed, *saying*, Thou hast here taken upon thee to reform the temple, which is our province alone, and hast in a tumultuous manner driven out those who had our permission to traffic in the outer court; we insist upon it, therefore, that thou *tell us* roundly and plainly *by what authority thou dost* all *these* extraordinary *things? and who he is that gave thee this authority* on which thou presumest *to do them?*

Tell us by what authority dost thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority [MARK, to do these things?]—[MAT. XXI.—23.—MARK XI. 28.]

3 *And Jesus*, that he might at once reprove the impropriety of the question in those circumstances, and in effect return an unexceptionable, though oblique, answer to it, *said to them in reply, I will also ask you one* plain *question* on this occasion; *and* pray *answer me* this *one thing, which if you tell me, I will likewise* give you all the satisfaction you can desire, and directly *tell you*, if you do yet indeed need to be told, *by* 4 *what authority I do these things.* You all remember *the baptism of John*, which was attended by such multitudes of people, and even by many of your leading men: (compare Mat. iii. 7, sect. xvi.) Now I would gladly know what you think of its original; *From whence was it* that he had his commission? was it *from heaven*, as he openly professed? *or* was it merely a contrivance *of men? Answer me* this, and then I will immediately resolve your question.

3 And [Jesus] answered and said unto them, I will also ask you [MARK, one question], and answer me; [*even* one thing, which if ye tell me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things.] [MAT. XXI. 24. MARK XI. 29.]

4 The baptism of John, [whence was it?] from heaven, or of men? [MARK, answer me.] [MAT. XXI. 25.—MARK XI. 30.]

5 *And they* were perfectly confounded at so unexpected a demand, and *reasoned among themselves*, as it was natural to do, after this manner, *saying, If we shall say*, That John's baptism was *from heaven, he will say to us, Why therefore did ye not believe him*, and yield to his well-known 6 and repeated testimony of me? *But if we shall say*, That his baptism had no Divine warrant, but was merely the device *of* some wicked and designing *men*, who by that grave solemnity endeavoured to introduce their own ambitious schemes, *we* have reason to *fear* that *all the populace* who are here assembled *will* rise up and *stone us; for they are all* firmly *persuaded that John was really a prophet* sent of God; and as vast numbers of them were baptised by him, they will never bear to hear him vilified, either as an 7 enthusiast or impostor. *And* therefore *they* declined to tell him what were their real sentiments, and *answered Jesus by saying, We cannot* yet certainly *tell whence* [*it was*]; for it is a question which still lies before the sanhedrim,

5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say [unto us], Why then believed ye him not? [MAT. XXI.—25. MARK XI. 31.]

6 But and if we [shall] say, Of men; [we fear] all the people will stone us: for they be [all] persuaded that John was a prophet [MARK, indeed.]—[MAT. XXI. 26. MARK XI. 32.]

7 And they answered [MARK, and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell] whence *it was*. [MAT. XXI. 27.—MARK XI. 33.—]

drim, and which they have not yet expressly determined. SECT. cli.

8 And Jesus [MARK, answering,] said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. [MAT. XXI. — 27. MARK XI. 33.]

And Jesus immediately *replied and said unto them, Neither do I* think it at all necessary to *tell you by what authority I do these things;* for the other question naturally requires to be determined first [f], and when you think proper to decide that, you may easily perceive that the same answer will serve for both [g]. Luke XX. 8.

MARK XII. 1.— And he began to speak unto them [*and* to the people] by parables.— [LUKE XX. 9.—]

And having thus silenced the members of the great council, who had taken upon them to examine him for his late proceedings, *he began to speak unto them,* [*and*] *to the people* who were now assembled, *by* several *parables,* of which we shall give a more particular account. Mark XII. 1.

MAT. XXI. 28. But what think ye? A *certain* man had two sons, and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.

And first, he said to the scribes and Pharisees, with whom he had been discoursing, You have evaded a direct answer to my question, *but what think you,* of your own conduct in these circumstances, and of all the high professions you make of an extraordinary reverence for God, and zeal in his service? I will plainly tell you my thoughts of it, which are very naturally connected with the present subject. Mat. XXI. 28.

There was *a man* who *had two sons; and coming to the first he said, Son, go* directly away and *work to day in my vineyard,* where thou knowest there is business to do that requires thine attendance.

29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterwards he repented, and went.

And he answered in a very rude and undutiful manner, *and said, I will not: but afterwards* considering better of it, *he repented* that he had used his father so ill; *and,* to make the best amends he could, he *went* into the vineyard, and laboured diligently there. 29

30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I *go Sir,* and went not.

And when the first had given so undutiful an answer to his father, *he came to the second and said* to him *in the same manner* as he had done to his brother: *and he,* being a smooth plausible lad, *answered,* with great submission and readiness, *and said, Sir,* [*I am going*] this moment to obey 30

[f] The other question naturally requires to be determined first.] That singular turn which the reader will observe to be given to this *answer* of *our Lord* in the *paraphrase* by which I think the propriety of it to be much illustrated, I owe to that very accurate and learned friend who suggested the substance of *note* g on John vii. 22. Vol. VI. p. 515.

The same answer will serve for both.] This was plainly the case; for as, on the one hand, the express testimony which John bore to Christ must be a sufficient proof of *his Divine mission,* if that of John was allowed (since, according to a Jewish maxim, *The testimony of one prophet was sufficient to confirm the authority of another;*) so Christ had spoken in such an honourable manner of John, that to condemn John as an impostor, would imply a like censure on the character of Jesus.

[h] *Sir,*

SECT. CLI.

obey your commands:[h] and *yet*, after all, *he went not* to the vineyard, but spent the whole day elsewhere.

Mat. XXI. 31. Now I would leave it to yourselves to judge *Which of the two* youths I have been speaking of *did the will of* [*his*] *father*, and with which of them he would, on the whole, be best pleased? and without any hesitation *they say to him*, Undoubtedly *the first* of them.

31 Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first.—

Then *Jesus*, upon this, *says to them*, The application of this parable is very easy; for thus it is, that notwithstanding your professions of a regard to God, yet in your practice you are disobedient children, and reject his gospel; and *verily I say unto you, That* even the most abandoned sinners of the age, such as *the publicans and common prostitutes*, are much more open to conviction, and more likely to be wrought upon than you; and so many of them have already been awakened to repentance, that their example might *lead you the way into the kingdom of God*, but with all your pretences to sanctity you will

— Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

32 not follow them. *For*, though you have not integrity enough freely to own it, you know in your own consciences, that *John came* not *unto you* in a suspicious manner, but *in the way of righteousness, and* did in all his ministry maintain the uniform character of an upright and pious man, as well as of a plain and awakening preacher, yet *you believed him not; but the publicans and harlots*, of whom I spake, *believed him; and you* were still so obstinate, that even *when you saw* [*it*], and perceived a growing reformation amongst the most abandoned of mankind, yet you *did not afterwards repent*, [*so as*] *to believe him.* (Compare Luke vii. 29, 30. Vol. VI. p. 305.) And therefore I solemnly warn you, that your condition will another day be worse than theirs; and that you shall see those whom you now despise and abhor, entering into the glory from which you shall be excluded.

32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him. And ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

IMPROVEMENT.

Mat. xxi. How little do the most specious *pretences of piety* signify if they are not animated by the heart, and confirmed by the life!

h *Sir, I am going.*] This was a proper emblem of the hypocrisy of the *scribes* and *Pharisees*; who addressed God under the most honourable titles, and professed the greatest readiness and zeal in his service, while their whole lives were a series of disobedience and rebellion.

life! How vain are all the complimental *forms of religion* when addressed to that God who penetrates all the secrets of the soul, and can have complacency in nothing but real and solid goodness! Yet how many are there, who are free of their *promises* both to God and man, but always fail when the time of *performance* comes! And how many, with these unhappy *rulers* in Israel, go on to pride themselves in a kind of external nearness to God, and perhaps in a boasted commission from him, who are themselves so *far from his kingdom*, that even *publicans and harlots*, who did not pretend to any religion, are more like to be brought into it than they, as being more open to a conviction of their sin and danger, and so more ready to embrace an offered Saviour! Let us dread the guilt of *receiving the grace of God in vain*, lest by rejecting the calls of the gospel, and abusing the privileges we enjoy, our hearts be *hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*, so as to perish in impenitence and unbelief. SECT. CLI. 28--31 32

In vain do we, like these Pharisees, inquire into the evidences of *Christ's authority*, if we are not heartily resolved to submit to it. Yet with such cavillers and hypocrites must his *ministers* expect to meet. May they learn, by the example of their great *Master*, to answer them with the *meekness of wisdom*, and to join the *sagacity of the serpent* with the *gentleness* and *innocence of the dove!* 23 24--27

The promises which are made to a *miraculous faith in prayer*, are not indeed *our immediate concern*; but we may truly infer from them some encouragement in favour of the *prayer of faith*, on whatever account, and in whatever circumstances it be offered. At least we may infer the necessity of *forgiving injuries*, if we desire that our petitions should be received with favour. Let us remember it; and labour to approach the throne of a *forgiving God*, with hearts not only clear of every malignant *passion*, but full of that cordial and universal *benevolence* which may engage us to pray for all men, and particularly for those who have least deserved our kindness, and seem least disposed to requite it. Mark xi. 23--24 25, 26

SECT. CLII.

Christ utters the parable of the vineyard let out to unfaithful husbandmen; from which he takes occasion plainly to admonish the Jewish rulers of the danger and ruin they would incur by the schemes they were forming against him. Mat. XXI. 33, *to the end;* Mark XII.—1—12. Luke XX. 9—19.

Mat. XXI. 33.

HEAR another parable: There was a

Mat. XXI. 33.

OUR Lord having thus reproved the priests and elders in the temple who had been questioning—— SECT. CLII. Mat. XXI. 33

SECT. clii.

questioning his authority, and shewn how inexcusable they were in not believing John, though they could not deny him to be sent of God, continued his discourse, and said to them and to the people, *Hear* now *another parable*, in which you are very nearly concerned, as your own consciences must quickly tell you: *There was a certain* man, a *master of a* considerable *family* and estate, *who planted a vineyard, and* spared no cost to render it fruitful; for he *made a* strong *hedge round it*, to preserve it from the incursion of men or beasts, *and digged* [*a place for*] *a wine-press in it*, [*or*] a large cavity which might serve as *a fat for the wine*, to receive the liquor when pressed from the grapes[a]; *and* he also *built a tower* in it for the accommodation and defence of the labourers; *and* then he *let it out to husbandmen*, who were to pay him a certain acknowledgment out of the produce of it; *and* he himself departed thence, and *took a journey for a long time into a distant country*.

Mat. XXI. 33.

a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, [*or a place for* the wine fat], and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country [LUKE, for a long time.] [MARK XII. —2. LUKE XX.—9.]

34 *And at the* proper *season, when the time of* gathering in *the fruit approached*, and a return was to be made him from the profits of it, *he sent his servants to the husbandmen* who had farmed it, *that he might receive from the husbandmen* that proportion *of the fruit of the vineyard* which was 35 due to him for the rent. *And the husbandmen* wickedly conspired to keep the vineyard to themselves, instead of receiving them with due respect, and returning the appointed payment, *seized his servants, and beat one* of the chief of those who arrived first, *and sent him empty away: and* as the demand grew more pressing, they took up the weapons with which their Lord himself had furnished them for very different purposes, *and slew another, and stoned another*, till they had driven him away.

34 And [at the season,] when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive [from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.] [MARK XII. 2. LUKE XX. 10.—]

35 And the husmandmen [caught] his servants, and beat one [and sent *him* away empty,] and killed another, and stoned another. [MARK XII. 3. LUKE XX.—10.]

36 *And* when their lord heard the report of this their injustice, *he* did not immediately arm himself against them, but *sent again other servants to* treat with *them, more* in number, and higher in office *than the first; but* still persisting in their wickedness, *they did the same unto them; and* particularly

36 [And] again, he sent [unto them] other servants, more than the first; and they did unto them likewise; [and at him *who was the chief*

[a] *A fat for the wine.*] Matthew uses the word ληνον, and Mark υπολήνιον. The former signifies the *wine-press*, the other the *cavity under it*, in which the vessel was fixed which received the liquor pressed from the grapes. The one of these naturally implies the other; but *our Lord* might without any impropriety mention both.

[b] *I will*

chief they cast stones, and wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully handled,] [Luke, and empty.] [Mark XII. 4. Luke XX. 11.]

Mark XII. 5. And again he sent another [the third *time*;] and him they [wounded also, and cast *him* out, *and*] killed: and many others, beating some, and killing some. [Luke XX. 12.]

Luke XX. 13. Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my —son. [Mark, Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved he sent him also last [of all] unto them, saying,] It may be they will reverence [my son] when they see him. [Mat. XXI. 37. Mark XII. 6.]

Mat. XXI. 38. But when the husbandmen saw the son, [Luke, they reasoned among themselves, saying,] This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance, [Luke, that *it* may be ours.] Mark XII. 7. Luke XX. 14.]

39 And they caught *him*,

particularly *at him* [*who was the chief*] person employed to account with them *they threw stones and wounded him* dangerously *in the head, and sent him away* not only *empty*, but very dishonourably *and shamefully treated.* SECT. clii. Mat. XXI. 36.

And again the third [*time he sent another* of his principal servants; *and him also they wounded* as they had done the former, *and* even were so outrageous, that *they cast him out* of the vineyard, [*and*] *killed him: and* in like manner they assaulted *many others*, who came with, or after him, on the same errand, *beating some* of them, *and killing others* outright. Mark XII. 5.

Then the lord of the vineyard, being still unwilling to proceed to the last extremity with them, though they had been so very wicked and ungrateful in the treatment of his servants, *said* to them that were about him, *What shall I do* farther to reclaim them? *I will send my* own *son* to them [b]. *Having yet therefore one son*, who was *his well beloved*, and the heir of the family *he sent him also last of all to them*, as the only gentle expedient that remained, *saying, Perhaps they will reverence my son when they see him*; [c] for surely they must needs have some respect for him, and will not presume to offer him any injury. *But when the husbandmen saw the son* come into the vineyard, instead of paying any due regard to him, *they* grew yet more outrageous in their wickedness, and *reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the* only *heir* of the whole estate, *come, let us kill him, and seize on his inheritance* [d], *that* [*it*] *may be ours* from generation to generation, and no descendants of our master may remain to give any disturbance to us or our children in the possession of it. *And* with malignant hearts and cruel hands *they* fell upon Luke XX. 13. Mat. XXI. 38. 39

[b] *I will send my son.*] The question is not here how prudent it would have been in a human father to venture his son in such a case as this; for the power which God had of *raising Christ from the dead*, and making all his sufferings redound to his glory and happiness, quite alters the case. The design is to shew the patience of God, and the wickedness of the Jews, by *this emblem*, than which nothing could be more expressive.

[c] *Perhaps they will reverence my son*, &c.] Numberless *predictions* in the *Old* and *New Testament* plainly shew, that God foresaw *Christ's death* as a certain event. This therefore, like many others, is merely an ornamental circumstance, which cannot without absurdity be applied in the interpretation of the *parable*.

[d] *Come let us kill him.* &c.] If such a *proposal* would have been the height of folly as well as wickedness in these *husbandmen*, it was so much the more proper to represent the part the *Jewish rulers* acted in the *murder of Christ*, which they were now projecting, and which they accomplished within three days. The admonition was most graciously given; but served only in an astonishing manner to illustrate that degree of hardness to which a sinful heart is capable of arriving.

[e] *And*

SECT. clii.

upon their master's son, and *seized him; and,* fearing neither God nor man, they *cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him*[c], exposing his dead body in a most contemptuous and insolent, as well as inhumane manner.

Mat. XXI. 39.

him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew *him.* [MARK XII. 8. LUKE XX. 15.—]

40 *When therefore the Lord of the vineyard* himself *cometh,* armed with a power which they will be utterly unable to resist, *what will he do,* think you, *to those* treacherous and cruel *husbandmen,* when he has them entirely at his disposal?

40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? [MARK II. 9.—LUKE XX. —15.]

41 And, as the Jewish rulers did not understand that they themselves were these unfaithful husbandmen, *they say unto him,* There is no doubt but *he will wretchedly destroy those* wicked and incorrigible *wretches,* nor is the most tormenting death too severe for them to expect; *and* he *will* then *let out the vineyard to other husbandmen, who shall* faithfully *render him the fruits* of it *in their* proper *seasons.*

41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

Luke XX. 16.

Thus did they, before they were aware, condemn themselves; and [*Jesus added*], You have answered right: *he shall* indeed quickly *come, and destroy these husbandmen* of whom I speak, whoever they shall appear to be, with terrible severity, *and* will *give the vineyard to others.* Now all this was as if he had said, Consider your own concern in what you have heard: God has planted a church among you, and given you an excellent revelation of his will; abundant provision has been made, both for your protection and your improvement too: but you have ungratefully refused the fruits of obedience, which were so justly his due; and when he has frequently sent his servants the prophets, with one message and demand after another, you the rulers and teachers of Israel, to whom the cultivation of the vineyard has been committed, have treated them in a most ungrateful and barbarous manner: and now at last he has sent his son, and you are going to seize on him, and to add that murder which you are now contriving to the guilt

LUKE XX. 16.—[*Jesus said*], He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. [MARK XII. —9.]

[c] *And cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.*] So Matthew and Luke express it; but Mark has changed the order of the words, and says, *They killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard;* if we may not render that clause, *They both slew him, and cast him out,* so as not to determine which was done first. One cannot suppose Christ uttered it both these ways; so that if there be no *accidental transposition* in Mark, he probably meant thereby to intimate what is hinted in the *paraphrase,* the *exposing his dead body* in a most daring defiance of public justice. Those that explain the *casting him out of the vineyard,* of *excommunication,* which preceded or attended the execution of a capital sentence, do not observe the proper import of *the vineyard.* See below, *note* i.

guilt of all your other crimes. I leave it therefore to your own consciences to judge what the event must be. And *for this reason* now *I say unto you* plainly, *That the kingdom of God*, which you have thus vilely and ungratefully abused, *shall be taken away from you, and given to a nation which shall bring forth the fruits thereof*; that is, his gospel shall be taken from you, and be carried to the Gentiles, who will have more regard to the favour shewn them, and improve it much better than you have done.

SECT. cliii.

MAT. XXI. 43. Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Mat. XXI. 43.

And when they heard this sad denunciation with which the parable concluded, and found that [*it*] was aimed at them, *they said*, *God forbid* that this should be the case with regard to us, nor can we ever believe that it will.

LUKE XX. — 16. And when they heard *it*, they said, God forbid.

Luke XX. 16.

And Jesus looked upon them with great seriousness and solemnity in his countenance, *and said unto them*, *What is this then that is written?* (Psal. cxviii. 22, 23.) *Did you never read*, or never reflect upon, *this* remarkable passage *in the scriptures*, "*The stone which the builders refused the same is become the head*-stone *of the corner*[f]: *this is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes?*" Words which though they might seem to be accomplished in the exaltation of David to the Jewish throne, are in their highest sense applicable to the Messiah[g], who, though disdainfully rejected by you scribes and Pharisees and rulers of the people, whose office it is to build up the church, is nevertheless chosen by God to be its great support and ornament. *And* therefore let me plainly tell you, That *whosoever shall fall upon this stone*, that is, whosoever shall stumble at me and my doctrine, while I am here on earth in this humble form, he *shall be broken* and damaged by it; *but on whomsoever it shall fall*, when raised up to so glorious an eminence,

17 And [Jesus] beheld them and said [unto] them, What is this then that is written? [Did ye never read [MARK, this] in the scriptures], The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: [This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? [MAT. XXI. 42. MARK XII. 10, 11.]

17

18 [And] whosoever shall fall upon [this] stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. [MAT. XXI. 44.]

18

[f] *The head*-stone *of the corner.*] This I take to be the meaning of the words κεφαλην γωνιας, rather than *the chief corner-stone*, as it does not appear exactly to answer to ακρογωνιαιον (Eph ii. 20, and 1 Pet. ii. 6), which, as the connection in those places shews (as well as the use of it in other authors), signifies that great *corner-stone* which lay at the bottom of the building as its support. What is mentioned afterwards of this *head-stone falling* on a person, seems not to suit with the supposition of its being laid on or under the ground. Compare Zech. iv. 7.

[g] Though they might seem to be accomplished in the exaltation of David, &c.] Mr. *Jeffery* has justly observed (in his *Review*, p. 119) that on the principles of *Analogy*, this passage will be much to the present purpose, though it should be confessed that Psal. cxviii. was immediately meant of David: as it will prove that the great *builders* of Israel might *refuse* one whom God intended for *the Head-stone of the corner.*

SECT. clii.

eminence, *it shall* even *grind him to powder*[h], like a brittle potsherd crushed by the weight of some huge stone falling upon it from on high: (compare Dan. ii. 44.) So whoever shall oppose me after my exaltation to glory, and the pouring out of my Sprit for the full revelation of my gospel and proof of my mission, he will bring upon himself aggravated guilt, and dreadful unavoidable destruction.

[Luke XX. 18.]

19 *And when the chief priests and the scribes and Pharisees had heard his parables* which he had now delivered, *they* were so provoked at what he had said, that even *in that very hour* they *sought to lay* their *hands on him*, that they might prosecute him even to death; *for they* plainly *perceived that he had spoken this parable* of the wicked husbandmen that should be destroyed *against them*[i], and had in effect set them all at defiance by the application of so signal a prophecy to himself. *But they feared the people* who were then present in the temple, *because they esteemed him as a Prophet* sent from God, and would not have borne that immediate assault upon him which the rage of these rulers would otherwise have engaged them to make. *And* therefore, not daring for the present to attempt to seize him with an open violence, *they left him, and went away* to take counsel in private against him, and to lay a plot for his life, which they might execute with less hazard to themselves.

19—And [when] the chief priests and the scribes [and Pharisees had heard his parables, they] the same hour sought to lay hands on him; for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them. [MAT. XXII. 45. MARK XII. 12.—]

[Mat. XXI. 46.]

MAT. XXI. 46. But—they feared the multitude, because they took him for a Prophet: [and they left him, and went their way.] [MARK, XII.—12.] LUKE XX. —19.]

IMPROVEMENT.

WHEN we read this *parable*, and consider it as levelled at the *Jews*, we applaud the righteous judgment of God in revenging so severely upon them the *quarrel of his covenant*, and the *blood of his Son*; but let us take heed to ourselves, *lest we also fall after the same example of unbelief.* (Heb. iv. 11.)

God

On whomsoever it shall fall, &c.] Dr. Whithy supposes that here is an allusion to the *two* different *ways of stoning* among the Jews; the former, by throwing a person down upon a great stone; and the other, by letting a stone fall upon him. But as I cannot see that the *latter* was at all more dreadful than the *former*, since in such a case a quick dispatch might seem most desirable, it seems to me that the force and beauty of this pathetic passage would be in a great measure lost by such an interpretation.

[i] *They perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.*] One would think they could be at no loss for the interpretation of it, considering how nearly it resembles that in Isa. v. 1—7, with which they were, no doubt, well acquainted. Only it is to be observed that there Israel is *the vineyard*, here the *true religion* is represented under that figure; accordingly there it is threatened that *the vineyard* should *be destroyed*, but here that it should *be let out to other husbandmen*; each event suiting its connection.

God has given to every man some part of *his vineyard* to cultivate and improve, or some advantages to know and serve him. And as for us who enjoy the *Christian* dispensation, we have particular reason to say, *the lines are fallen to us in pleasant places.* (Psal. xvi. 6.) *What could he have done more for* this part of *his vineyard?* How ungrateful therefore shall we be, and how miserable too, if we with-hold *the fruits* he so reasonably expects; if we slight the *messengers* by whom he so frequently and so pathetically demands them; yea, if by wilful impenitence and unbelief we in effect renew the *slaughter* of *his beloved Son*, after that amazing favour he has done us, in charging him with an *embassy of peace* to us, whose aggravated crimes had long since deserved that he should have sent amongst us the *messengers of his vengeance.* Oh that we may never be *condemned out of our own mouths* in the censures we pass on the guilty *Jews!*

SECT. CLII.

Mat. xxi. 33.

34, 36

37, 39

41

We cannot surely think of the awful threatening of *our Lord* without some secret terror for ourselves, when we consider how shamefully we of this nation have abused our privileges. *The kingdom of God*, said he, *shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* God had been just had he long since executed such a judgment upon us: may he be merciful to us all in suspending and averting it! May his compassion particularly extend to those amongst us who reject *Christianity*; for the passage before us has a dreadful aspect upon such! Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; whether they will submit, or whether they will oppose; *Christ is made the Head of the corner*, and God will for ever establish him as such. Wo to them who, instead of joining with him, and fixing the stress of their souls upon him, deliberately set themselves to oppose his cause and interest! On such undoubtedly *will he fall* like a mighty rock of adamant, and miserably crush them in pieces, and *grind them to powder.*

43

42

44

Thus did *our Lord* warn his enemies most wisely and most graciously; but they despised the admonition, and hated him for what was so kindly intended. *They sought to lay hands on him* because *he had spoken this parable against them.* High provocation indeed, to set their danger faithfully before them, that if by any means it were possible they might be awakened to escape it! But, alas, what can save those whose spiritual distempers are exasperated by the most proper remedies prescribed for their cure.

Luke xx. 19.

SECT. CLIII.

Christ farther warns the Jews of the danger which would attend their rejecting the gospel, or resting in an insincere profession of it, by the parable of the marriage-feast and the wedding-garment. Mat. XXII. 1—14.

MAT. XXII. 1.

SECT. CLIII.

Mat. XXII. 1. AND when the priests and scribes were retired, *Jesus*, being still surrounded with the multitude, *answered and spake to them again in parables*, suited to the present circumstances of affairs, *saying*, *The kingdom of heaven*, or the dispensation of the gospel, *is like*, and may be well compared to, that which happened in the case of *a man* [*that was*] *a king* [a], *who made a* splendid *marriage-feast for his son*. *And* when all was prepared, *he sent his servants to call those who had been* before *invited*, that they might come immediately *to the nuptial banquet* [b]. *But they* were so rude and foolish, that they *would not come* upon the summons.

Again he sent other of his *servants*, *saying*, Go and *tell them that were invited*, that I must insist upon their coming immediately; for *behold*, *I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and* my other *fatted beasts are slain* and dressed [c], *and all things are* just *ready* to be served up to the table; therefore *come to the marriage-feast* without any farther delay. *But* such was the perverseness of the guests, that, notwithstanding this repeated invitation, they refused to come; and, *not regarding* [*it*], *they went away*, *one* of them *to*

MAT. XXII. 1.

AND Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,

2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

4 Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

[a] *The kingdom of heaven is like a king.*] See *note* i, on Luke vii. 32. Vol. VI. p. 306.—It is observable that Luke does not relate *this parable* here, because he had given us one very much like it before, which was spoken on a different occasion: (Luke xiv. 16—24. sect. cxx.) For the same reason he omits the *question* of the *lawyer*, Mat. xxii. 35. most of the discourse against the *Pharisees*, Mat. xxiii. and the *parable* of the *talents*, Matt. xxv. 14. *& seq.*

[b] *To call those who had been invited to the nuptial banquet.*] The word γαμος here properly signifies *a nuptial banquet*, in which sense it is often used by other writers. (See *Raphel. Annot. ex Polyb.* p. 93, and *Wolfius, in loc.*) It was sometimes customary to send *two messages*, as in the case here supposed; which represented the condescension the greater, and suited the *repeated invitations* given to the Jews by Christ himself during his life, and by the *apostles* after his death.

[c] *My oxen and* my *fatted beasts are slain.*] It was agreeable to the simplicity of the ancient ages to mention these as the chief parts of a royal entertainment. Thus in Homer, and other ancient writers, we see princes of the first rank and dignity feasting each other with nothing but the flesh of oxen, sheep, and swine.—Compare Isa. xxv. 6.

[d] *And,*

SECT. cliii.

Mat. XXII. 6.

to his field in the country, *and another to his mer-*
chandise in the city. *And the rest* were so
6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*.
brutish that, *laying hold on his servants* who came with the message, they shamefully *insulted* them in a very outrageous manner, *and* even carried their ingratitude so far, that they *slew* some
7 But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city.
of *them*. *And when the king heard* [*of it*], *he was* greatly *provoked; and*, not long after, *having sent his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and* even *burnt their city* where they dwelt[d], which, being disaffected to him, had joined with these wicked men in concerting this gross and intolerable affront.

8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.
In the mean time *then*, upon the king's receiving intelligence of their insolent behaviour, *he says to his servants, The marriage-feast is prepared; but they who were* first *invited were not worthy* of any part in it, or indeed of any invitation to it: Yet let not the provisions I have made be lost: *go ye therefore to the* most *public ways*, and particularly to the places where several streets and roads meet[e], *and invite as many as you find* there *to the wedding-banquet*. *And* accordingly *those servants went out*, as their lord had commanded them, *into the* streets and other [*public*] *ways, and assembled all that they met with, whether bad or good*, without any regard to their characters or circumstances: *and the feast was abundantly supplied with guests.*

9 Go ye therefore into the high-ways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

10 So those servants went out into the high-ways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment:
But that, whatever habits they had on before, they might appear worthy to sit at such a table, *the king* had ordered clean white garments to be delivered to each of them, and appointed servants whose province it was to see that they were decently dressed; after which, *coming in to view the guests*, he *saw a man there* who, though such habits were provided, yet was *not clothed with a wedding-garment*[f]; but either in contempt of the

[d] *And*, not long after, *having sent his armies*, &c.] This *clause* must be supposed to come in by way of *prolepsis* or *anticipation*, for it is plain there could not be time, before the feast already prepared was served up, to attempt an execution of this kind.—This circumstance seems to point at the slaughter of the Jews, and the burning Jerusalem and the other chief cities of their country by the Romans; who are here considered as the *armies* of their affronted prince, whose *ambassadors* they had indeed most cruelly and ungratefully murdered.

[e] *The* most *public ways*, &c.] The phrase διεξοδους των οδων, signifies *the ways* which were *most frequented*; which must be such as are mentioned in the *paraphrase*. (See *Boisius, Compar. in loc.*) This intimates that the Gentiles had as little reason to expect the *call* of the *gospel* as common passengers and travellers to expect an invitation to a *royal banquet*.

[f] Who, though such habits were provided, yet was *not clothed with a wedding-garment*.] That persons making an entertainment sometimes *furnished the habits* in which the guests should appear, is evident from what *Homer* says of *Ulysses* being thus furnished

SECT. CLIII.

the feast, or presuming his own habit might do as well as that which was offered him, had refused to accept it. *And he said to him, Friend,* *how camest thou in hither, not having* on *a wedding garment* suited to the occasion? Was it not offered to thee? or hadst thou so little sense of decency and gratitude as to refuse to accept it in compliance with the order of my feast? *And he was* presently *struck speechless*[g], being confounded with the majesty of the royal presence, and conscious of his own insolence and folly.

Mat. XXII. 12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless.

13 *Then the king*, being justly incensed at so great an affront, resolved to punish it by a severe imprisonment; and therefore *said to* [*his*] *servants, Bind his hands and feet, and take him away* hence, from all the joy and splendor of the guest-chamber, *and cast him out into the darkness which is without*[h]; and *there*, instead of the mirth and delight of my banquet, there *shall be* nothing but *weeping and gnashing of the teeth* for anguish and despair. (Compare Mat. viii. 12. Vol. VI. p. 295.)

13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14 Nor imagine, said our Lord in the conclusion and improvement of the parable, that this will be the case of one alone; *for* though it be a dreadful truth, yet I must say, that even the greatest

14 For many are called,

furnished by the *Phæacians (Odyss.* lib. viii. ver. 402); and from the account which *Diodorus* gives of the great hospitality of Gellias the Sicilian, who readily received all strangers, and at once supplied 500 horsemen with *clothes*, who by a violent storm were driven to take shelter with him: *(Diod. Sic.* lib. xiii. p. 375. *Edit. Steph.)*—Now it was usual, more especially at *marriage-feasts*, for persons to appear in a *sumptuous dress*, adorned, as some writers tell us, with florid embroidery (Dr. *Hammond, in loc.)* though many times *white garments* seem to have been used on such occasions: (compare Rev. xix. 8, 9.) But as it could not be expected that *travellers* thus pressed in should themselves be provided with *a suitable habit*, we must therefore conclude, not only from the magnificence of the preparations, to which we must suppose the wardrobe of the prince corresponded, but likewise from the following circumstance of *resentment* against this guest, that *a robe* was offered, but refused by him. And this is a circumstance which (as Calvin observes) is admirably suited to the method of God's dealing with us; who indeed requires *holiness* in order to our receiving the benefits of the gospel, but is graciously pleased to work it in us by his *Holy Spirit;* and therefore may justly resent and punish our neglect of so great a favour.

g *He was struck speechless.*] I render it [*struck speechless,*] because the word εφιμωθη is in the *passive form*, and is very expressive. It is applied to the *muzzling of cattle*, 1 Cor. ix. 9. Compare 1 Tim. v. 18. and 1 Pet. ii. 15.

h *Cast him out into the darkness which is without.*] The mention of this circumstance in this connection would incline one to think, either that the word αριστον (in ver. 4) may signify *supper* as well as *dinner* (which some *critics* have thought), or that the king is represented as visiting the guests *in the evening*. But not to insist on this, which is of little moment, it is well known that *banquets* of this kind were generally celebrated in rooms that were finely *illuminated* and richly adorned: (see *note g*, on Mat. viii. 12. Vol. VI. p. 295.) And, considering how splendid and magnificent the entertainments of the *eastern princes* were, it cannot be thought an unnatural circumstance that such an affront as this offered to the king, his son, his bride, and the rest of the company, should be punished with such *bonds*, and thrown into a *dungeon*.

called, but few are chosen.

greatest part of those to whom the gospel is offered will either openly reject or secretly disobey it; and while *many* indeed *are called* to the gospel-feast, it will be manifest, by their disregarding it, there are *but few chosen* in such a sense as finally to partake of its blessings. (Compare Mat. xx. 16. p. 114.)

SECT. cliii.

Mat. XXII. 14

Thus did he strongly intimate to the Jews, that since they despised the rich provisions of his gospel-grace, incomparably more valuable than those of a royal feast, and since they used the messengers whom God had sent to them in so ungrateful and barbarous a manner, they must expect to be cut off and destroyed by those hostile armies which Divine Providence would speedily bring upon them; but that the gospel should be embraced by the Gentiles, and vast numbers of them be converted and saved by it. And he farther intended to insinuate, by the circumstance of the wedding-garment, that as God had made provision in his gospel for the sanctification of men's hearts, and the reformation of their lives, he expected true holiness and cordial obedience from all who professed to embrace it; and would another day take a strict review of all its professors, that he might separate habitual sinners from the number and the blessings of his people, and deliver them over to perpetual darkness and misery.

IMPROVEMENT.

How rich are the provisions of the gospel! *a feast* indeed becoming the bounty and majesty of the *King* of heaven; and proportionable even to the love which he bears to his own *Son*, in honour of whom it is made!

Mat. xxii. 2

How wonderful is the grace which *calls us* to the participation of these provisions; *us*, who were originally *sinners of the Gentiles, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise!* (Eph. ii. 12.) Yet has he graciously *sent his messengers* to us, and *invited us* to his house, yea, to *his table*, with the additional hope of yet nobler entertainments in reserve. May none of us *reject* so condescending *a call*, lest we turn *his goodness* into righteous indignation, and *treasure up to ourselves wrath against the day of wrath!* (Rom. ii. 5.)

9, 10

4—6

Let us also remember, that it is not every one who professes to accept the entertainment, not every one who talks of gospel-blessings,

SECT. cliii.

Ver. 11 ings, and seems to desire a share in them, that will be admitted to it. No: in order to our *partaking of an inheritance among the saints in light,* it is necessary that we be *made meet for it* by the holiness both of our hearts and lives, (Col. i. 12.) This is *the wedding garment,* wrought by the *Spirit of God* himself, and offered to us by the freedom of his grace. And it is so necessary, that without it we must be *separated* from the number of his guests and friends, and even, though we had *eaten and drank in his presence,* must be *cast out into outer darkness,* (Luke xiii. 26.)

Frequently let us think of that awful day when *the King* will *come in to see his guests;* when God will take a most exact survey of every soul under a *Christian* profession. Let us think of that *speechless* confusion which will seize such as *have not on the wedding-garment,* and of that inexorable severity with which they will be consigned to *weeping and gnashing of teeth.* To have seen for a while the light of the gospel, and the fair beamings of an eternal hope, will add deeper and more sensible horror to those gloomy caverns; to have heard those *glad tidings of great joy,* and to hear them, as it were, echoed back in accents of *final despair,* how will it wound the ear, and pierce the very heart! May God prevent it, by *fulfilling in us all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in us, and we in him* (2 Thess. i. 11, 12.) when the *marriage supper of the Lamb* shall be celebrated, and all the harmony, pomp, and beauty of heaven shall aid its solemnity, its magnificence, and its joy!

12 13

SECT. CLIV.

Our Lord confounds the Pharisees and Herodians when they hoped to have ensnared him by their question relating to the lawfulness of paying the Roman tribute. Mat. XXII. 15—22. Mark XII. 13—17. Luke XX. 20—26.

MAT. XXII. 15.

SECT. cliv.

Mat. XXII. 15

THEN the Pharisees, stung with the severe but just rebukes he had been giving them in the foregoing parables, *went* out from his presence, *and* retiring, *took counsel* together *how they might ensnare him in* [*his*] *discourse,* and find something on which they might ground an accusation or complaint against him. *And they* narrowly *watched him* in all his motions that day, *and sent out spies to* try if they could take *him* at an advantage, *who should pretend themselves to be righteous men,* that were come, for the ease of their

Luke XX. 20.

Mat. XXII. 15. THEN went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk.

LUKE XX. 20. And they watched *him,* and sent forth [unto him] spies, which should feign themselves just men [MARK, *even* certain

sect. cliv.

Luke XX. 20.

certain [disciples] of the Pharisees and of the Herodians], that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor. [MAT. XXII. 16.—MARK XII. 13.]

their consciences, to propose a scruple to him on an affair of great importance. Now those that were sent on this errand were persons of opposite sects; [*even*] *some* of the *disciples of* the leading men among *the Pharisees*, who were very solicitous for the freedom of their country from every mark of slavery; *and* [*some*] of the sect *of the Herodians*, a party of men (as was before observed) peculiarly attached to the family of Herod, and consequently zealous in the interest of the Roman government, which was the main support of the dignity and royalty of that family. (See note [f] on Mark iii. 6. Vol. VI. p. 274.) And these, different as their principles were, combined together in an attempt upon Jesus, *that* if an opportunity offered, *they might lay hold on his words*[a], either to render him obnoxious to the people as an enemy to their liberties, or *to deliver him up* as a seditious person *to the power and authority of* Pontius Pilate, who was then *the* Roman *Governor* of that province.

21 And [MARK, when they were come] they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou [art true, and] sayest and teachest rightly [neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men], [MARK, but teachest the way of God in truth]: [MAT. XXII.—16. MARK XII. 14.—]

And when they were come to him, in order to accomplish their design, *they* craftily accosted him with an air of great respect, and with flattering expressions of the highest esteem; and *asked him, saying, Master, we know*, and are well satisfied, *that thou art true* and upright; *and* as thou comest as a Messenger from God, so, after the example of those faithful and courageous prophets who were in Israel in its better ages, thou *sayest and teachest rightly*, and art impartial and sincere in every thing that thou declarest; *neither carest thou for* the censure or applause of *any man; for thou regardest not the person of men*, so as to be influenced by complaisance or fear, or any private views whatever, to deviate from the strictest integrity and veracity; *but* plainly *teachest the way of God* and the path of duty 21

[a] *That they might lay hold on his words.*] They hoped to have *ensnared him* by the question they came to propose, whatever answer he could have returned. If he *asserted* on the one hand, that *tribute* was to be paid to Cæsar, the Pharisees, who generally maintained (as Judas Gaulonites had done) that such a subjection to a foreign power was inconsistent with the privileges of God's peculiar people, would have endeavoured to expose him to *popular resentment*, as betraying the liberties of his country. On the other hand, had he *denied* the lawfulness of *this tribute*, the Herodians would have had a very plausible pretence of accusing him to the *Roman power*, as a seditious person, which his persecutors had afterwards the assurance to do; Luke xxiii. 2, sect. clxxxvi. (Compare Acts xvii. 7.) Nay, perhaps, the very circumstance of taking upon him to determine such a question might, by these invidious inquirers, be construed as a pretence to sovereignty. See *Voss. Harmon. Evang.* p. 54, 55.

[b] One

SECT. cliv.

duty *in truth*. We are come *therefore* to propose a question to thee, about which thou knowest that we Pharisees and Herodians are divided, and to which an interested man who was governed by principles of human policy might, perhaps, be unwilling to answer: *tell us*, we pray thee (for we have determined to submit our judgment and practice to thy sentiments in the matter, *What thinkest thou? Is it lawful for us* Jews, who are the peculiar people of God, and are many of us in conscience tender of acknowledging any king but him, or one of our brethren appointed by his immediate delegation[b], *to pay* the usual *tribute to Cæsar*, the Roman Emperor, *or not?* What dost thou advise in this case, as right for us to do? *Shall we give* it to the collectors, *or shall we not give* it? We must beg an immediate answer, for the tribute is even now demanded of us. And here they ceased, as thinking they had him in an inextricable snare, and that he could return no answer which would not expose him to the severe resentment either of the Jewish people or of the Roman officers.

Mat. XXII.17

Mark XII. 15.

MAT. XXII. 17. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful [LUKE, for us] to give tribute unto Cesar, or not? [MARK XII. — 14. LUKE XX. 22.]

MARK XII. 15.— Shall we give, or shall we not give?—

But Jesus, knowing their hypocrisy, which was indeed their reigning character, *perceived their craftiness [and] wickedness* in this address, however pious and respectful it appeared, *and* therefore *said to them, Ye hypocrites, Why do ye tempt me* by such an ensnaring question, and seek to draw me into danger and destruction by it? Is this a proof of your regard and friendship to a faithful and impartial Teacher? But that I may return a proper answer to your question, whatever be the view that you may have in asking it, *shew me the tribute money* which is demanded of you; and *bring me* hither *a penny*, or denarius, *that I may see it*. *And they brought him a* Roman *penny*. *And*, looking upon it, *he says to them, Whose is this image* which is struck upon the coin, *and* whose *inscription* and title is this [*which*] *it has* round it[c]? *And they*, without

Mat. XXII.19

Mark XII. 16.

— But [Jesus], knowing their hypocrisy [LUKE, perceived their craftiness], [*and* wickedness, and] said unto them, Why tempt ye me [ye hypocrites?] [MAT. XXII. 18. LUKE XX. 23.]

MAT. XXII. 19.— Shew me the tribute money: [Bring me a penny, that I may see *it*.] MARK XII.—15.] LUKE XX. 24.—]

MARK XII. 16. And they brought [unto him a penny]. And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription [LUKE, *that* it hath?]

b One of our brethren, &c.] We are told that the grand argument which the followers of Judas Gaulonites, and others inclined to their party, urged, as decisive against the authority of the Romans, was that text which prohibited their *setting a stranger to be king over them*, Deut. xvii. 15. And Grotius (in his *note* on Mat. xxii. 16.) seems to think it was this that formerly engaged them so vigorously to oppose the Chaldeans, and to refuse submitting to their government, till Jerusalem was destroyed. See *note* [a] on Luke xiii. 1, p. 7.

c *Whose is this image and inscription!*] *Dr. Lightfoot* tells us (in his *Hor. Heb.* on Mat. xxii. 20) that the Jews have a tradition

hath?] And they [Luke, answered and] said unto him, Cesar's. [Mat. XXII.—19, 20, 21.—Luke XX.—24.]

17—And Jesus answering said unto them, Render [therefore] to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's. [Mat. XXII.—21. Luke XX. 25.

without perceiving his design, immediately *answered and said to him*, It is *Cæsar's:* thereby in effect acknowledging that they were under his dominion, by their admitting his coin as current among them. *And Jesus answering said unto them, Render therefore to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's and to God the things which are God's*[d]; and labour so to adjust your regards and duties to both, that you may not on the one hand, under pretence of religion, do any injury to Cæsar, nor on the other hand, under pretence of duty to Cæsar, violate any of the commands of God, or fail of that respect to him which he requires: whereby he plainly intimated that tribute was to be paid to Cæsar as due to his government; yet did it in such a manner, and with such restrictions, as prevented the inconvenience of a more express declaration.

sect. cliv.

Mark XII. 17.

Luke XX. 26. And [when they had heard *these words*], they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace [and left him, and went their way]. [Mat. XXII. 22. Mark XII.—17.]

And when they had heard [*his*] wise and unexceptionable [*answer*], *they* plainly found that they *could not take hold of his words before the people*, so as to incense and stir them up against him, as no friend to their liberties; *and* they were equally unable to accuse him to the Romans of sedition, on account of any thing he had then said as derogating fromthe rights of Cæsar. *They* therefore *wondered at* the prudence and address of *his reply*, by which he had effectually disentangled himself from what they thought must unavoidably have ensnared him; *and* were so perfectly confounded, that they *held their peace, and left him; and* deeply sensible of the disgrace, as well as disappointment they had met with, they *went away* amazed and ashamed.

Luke XX. 26.

IMPROVE-

tion among them, that to admit of the title of any prince on their current coin, was an acknowledgment of subjection to him. It is certain, their not daring to refuse this coin, when offered them in payment, was in effect a confession that they were conquered by the Romans, and consequently that the emperor had a right to their tribute.

d *And to God the things which are God's.*] Diodate, Raphelius, and some other *commentators*, interpret this as a caution against omitting the *sacred tribute*, on pretence of answering the demands of Cæsar, who (they say) had claimed it to himself. But I apprehend *our Lord* had a more extensive view; and that as he cautions the Pharisees against using religion as a pretence to justify sedition, so he also warns the Herodians, that they should not, as they were too inclinable to do, make a compliment of their religion to the Romans, by complying with those things which were forbidden by the Divine law, that they might ingratiate themselves with Cæsar's party. See *Prideaux Connection*, Vol. II. p. 366—368.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. CLIV.

AGAIN does *our Lord* renew the repeated lesson he had before given us, both by precept and example, of uniting *wisdom* and *innocence*. How admirable was this mixture of prudence and integrity with which he confounded these *Pharisees* and *Herodians*, who, contrary as their principles and interests were, conspired against him! *For of a truth*, O Lord, *against thine holy Child Jesus, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the people of Israel, were gathered together* (Acts iv. 27); and their *words were softer than oil*, when *war* and murder *was in their hearts*. (Psal. lv. 21.)

Luke xx. 25, 26

20

21 Let us not, with *the simple, believe every* flattering *word* (Prov. xiv. 15), since sometimes the highest *encomiums* may be designed as the instruments of mischief: and too often they prove so, when they are not treacherously intended.

Our Lord was indeed the Person whom these artful *hypocrites* described; and was in that respect an excellent Pattern to all his followers, and especially to his *ministers*. He *knew no man* in the discharge of his office; but, without *regarding the persons of any*, neither seeking their favour nor fearing their resentment, he *taught the way of God in truth*, and *declared the whole of his counsel*.

Mat. xxii. 16.

21 Let us particularly attend to his decision in the present case, and learn with the utmost readiness to *render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's*. Our civil magistrates, by virtue of their office, justly claim our reverent regard; and *tribute* is most reasonably *due* to those who *attend continually* to the service of the public, and are, under God, the pillars of our common tranquility and happiness. (Rom. xiii. 6, 7.) Let that *tribute* therefore be justly and freely *rendered* with honour, and with cheerfulness; as he is surely unworthy to share in the benefits of government who will not contribute his part towards its necessary expence. But let it also be remembered that the *rights of God* are sacred and inviolable: he, and he alone, is the Lord of conscience; and when that is invaded, it is easy to *judge whether man or God* is to be *obeyed*; (Acts iv. 19.) Let us be daily thankful that in our own age and country *these rights* are so happily united. May a guardian Providence continue to watch over both! and may we seriously consider how impossible it is, under such a government, to be *good Christians*, without being *obedient subjects*, or to *fear God*, if we do not *honour the king!* (1 Pet. ii. 17.)

SECT.

SECT. CLV.

Our Lord proves the resurrection to the Sadduccees, and answers their foolish objection against it. Mat. XXII. 23—33; Mark XII. 18—27; Luke XX. 27—40.

LUKE XX. 27.

THEN [the same day] came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him, [MAT. XXII. 23. MARK XII. 18.]

THEN on that day in which our Lord had thus confounded the Pharisees and the Herodians, *some of the Sadducees came to him, who* (as it was before observed) were a set of pretended free-thinkers among the Jews, that *deny there is any resurrection* of the dead[a], or any future state in which the soul exists after death[b] to receive the reward of its actions. And they applied themselves to Jesus, *and asked him* a question, in which they put a case which they used often to urge against those who were of a different opinion from themselves, and with which they also hoped to puzzle him: *Saying, Master,* if there be, as we know thou teachest, a resurrection of the dead, how can this difficulty which we are going to propose be adjusted? *Moses,* as thou well knowest, *said, [and] wrote to us* this precept (Deut. xxv. 5), *That if a man's brother die, and leave a wife and no children behind him, his* surviving *brother should take his wife, and raise up seed to his brother;* the first child of this second marriage being esteemed the child of the deceased, so as to inherit his whole estate and bear up his name. *Now* it so happened, that *there were with us,* in a certain family in our neighbourhood, *seven brethren; and the first* of these brethren *when he had married a wife, died* quickly after, *and having had* no

SECT. CLV.

Luke XX. 27.

28 Saying, Master, Moses [said *and*] wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, [MARK, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children], that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. [MAT. XXII. 24. MARK XII. 19.]

28

MAT. XXII. 25. Now there were with us seven brethren; and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and having no [LUKE, children], left his wife unto his brother. [MARK XII. 20. LUKE XX. 29.]

Mat. XXII. 25

a *Who deny there is any resurrection.*] It is generally known that their master Sadoc, from whom the Sadducees took their name, taught that God was not to be served from *mercenary principles,* that is (as he crudely explained it), from hope of reward, or fear of punishment. His followers interpreted this as an implicit denial of a *future state,* and so imbibed that pernicious notion of the utter destruction of the soul at death, equally uncomfortable and absurd. See *Drusius, in loc.*—The story which they mention here seems to have been a kind of common-place objection, as we meet with it in the old Jewish writers. See *Lightfoot Hor. Heb. in loc.*

b Or any future state, &c.] As it is expressly said, Acts xxiii. 8, that they *denied any spirit,* and consequently the existence of the soul in a separate state; so *our Lord's* answer here, and much of St. Paul's reasoning in 1 Cor. xv. goes on the supposition of such a denial on their part. See 2 Mac. xii. 42—44, where the author proves that Judas believed *a resurrection,* from his offering sacrifices for *the souls* of the slain.

SECT. CLV.

no children. left his wife of course to be married *to his brother. And* upon this *the second* followed the direction of the law, and *took her to wife; and he likewise*, after he had been some time married, *died childless*, as his elder brother did. *And* then *the third took her*, and he also died as the others had done, without issue: *and in like manner also* all the rest went on, till every one of *the seven* brothers *had* married *her; and they* all *died, and left no children* behind them. *And last of all the woman* herself *also died* without any issue, not having married into any other family but this. The question *therefore* is, *When they shall rise*, as you say they all will, *in the* general *resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for all the seven had her to wife:* and as they stood in an equal relation to her in this world, they all seem to have exactly an equal claim to her in the next.

Luke XX. 30. And the second took her to wife, and he [likewise] died childless. [Mat. XXII. 26.—Mark XII. 21.—]

31 And the third took her: and in like manner the seven also [Mark, had her]: And they left no children, and died [Mat. XXII.—26. Mark XII.—21. 22.—]

32. [And] last of all the woman died also. [Mat. XXII. 27. Mark XII.—22.]

33 Therefore in the resurrection [Mark, when they shall rise], whose wife [shall she be of the seven]? for [all] [Mark, the] seven had her to wife. [Mat. XXII. 28. Mark XII. 23.]

Luke XX. 30. 31 32 33

Thus they attempted in a sneering manner to overthrow all the arguments for a future state, which might be advanced either from reason, or from scripture. *And Jesus* therefore *answered and said to them*, It plainly appears from your manner of stating the question, that *you are* greatly *mistaken*, and go entirely on a wrong supposition; *not knowing*, on the one hand, what is so plainly intimated in *the scriptures* of a resurrection, which, if well understood, implies no contradiction at all; *nor* attending on the other hand, to *the power of God*, which is able with infinite ease to effect what to man seems most difficult and improbable.

Mat. XXII. 29

Mat. XXII. 29. [And] Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. [Mark XII. 24. Luke XX. 34.—]

And as to this particular difficulty which you now object, it ought to be considered, that *the children of this world* do indeed *marry, and are given in marriage*, according to the wise provision which God has made by that institution, for repairing the wastes of mortality by the production of new generations. *But they who shall be counted worthy to obtain that* blessed *world* which God has prepared for his people above, *and* to be admitted to the never-fading honours that will succeed *the resurrection* of good men *from the dead*, will be in very different circumstances *when they shall rise*, and *neither marry, nor are given in marriage: For they can die no more*, and therefore the rise of new generations is no longer necessary; *since* in this respect *they*

Luke XX. 34. 35 36

Luke XX.—34. The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead [Mark, when they shall rise], neither marry, nor are given in marriage. [Mat. XXII. 30. —Mark XII. 25.—]

36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels [of God

God in heaven], and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection [MAT. XXII.—30. MARK XII.—25.]

they are equal to the angels of God in heaven[c], *and are the children of God*, and heirs of immortality and glory, *being the children of the resurrection*[d], which shall instate them in a complete felicity, answerable to so near a relation to the Divine Being: and consequently all such difficulties as you have now been urging are entirely superseded by the happiness and perfection of so exalted a state.

SECT. CLV.

Luke XX. 36.

37 [But as touching the resurrection], that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: [MARK, have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God

37 *But as for* the evidence of *the resurrection* in general, not to insist on many plainer passages in the other books of scripture, for which you do not profess so great a regard[e], I may say, that *even Moses* in effect *shewed that the dead are* to be *raised, when* speaking of what happened *at the* burning *bush* (Exod. iii. 6), *he calls the Lord*, from whom he there received his commission, "*the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and*

c *Are equal to the angels of God in heaven.*] Matthew and Mark say only that they are *as the angels* (ως αγγελοι), and though Luke expresses it by a stronger word (ισαγγελοι), that they are *equal to the angels*, yet all arguments drawn from hence, as proving an entire *equality* of glorified saints with angels in all respects, must be apparently weak and inconclusive. It is indeed the glorious scheme of redeeming love to incorporate *angels* and *saints* into one happy society under Christ as their common Head, (Eph. i. 10.) but there are *subordinations* in united societies. And if the fall of the apostate spirits occasioned any thing like a *vacancy* in the *celestial hierarchy*, it would seem most probable it might be filled up from heavenly spirits of an inferior order, who might be preferred to the rank their degenerate brethren lost, as a reward for their approved fidelity to God. But it becomes us to be exceeding modest in our conjectures on such subjects as these, lest we incur the censure of *intruding into things which we have not seen.* Col. ii. 18.

d *And are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.*] This plainly intimates that good men are called *God's children*, with a view to the *inheritance* to which they are adopted, on the final possession of which they enter at the resurrection. Compare Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 7. 1 John iii. 2. and Rom. viii. 29. See the *Essay on Divine Dispensations*, p. 8, 9.

e Other books of scripture, for which you do not profess so great a regard.] The Sadducees are thought by many to have agreed with the Samaritans in rejecting all the *other parts* of holy *scripture* but the *five books of Moses*; which is particularly contended for by *Serrarius.* (*Trihæres*, lib. ii. cap. 21, and *Minerval* lib. iv. cap. 14.) But this is questioned by *Drusius* (*de tribus sectis*, lib. iii. cap. 9), and *Reland* (*Antiq. Heb.* part ii. cap. 11.) and Scaliger maintains the contrary, and shews that the passage from *Josephus* (*Antiq.* lib. xiii. cap. 10 (al. 18), § 6), which is commonly alledged in defence of that opinion, only relates to their rejecting all *traditions.* (*Elench. Trihæres.* cap. 16.) And indeed, as it appears from the Talmud that *other parts of the Old Testament* were often quoted by the Sadducees, and arguments were brought from thence against them by the Pharisees to prove the *resurrection*, which they endeavoured only to evade, without disputing the authority of *texts*, though they were not taken from the *law of Moses*; it is more reasonable to believe with Dr. *Lightfoot* (in his *Hor. Hebr.* on John iv. 25), that they did not reject the *other books* of the *Old Testament*, but only gave a great preference to the *five books of Moses*; and, laying it down as a principle, to receive nothing as an article of faith, which could not be proved from *the law*, if any thing was urged from *other parts* of *scripture* that could not be deduced from Moses, they would explain it in some other way. And this might be sufficient to induce *our Lord* to bring his argument to prove the *resurrection* from what Moses had said, and to confirm it by that part of *scripture* which was most regarded by the Sadducees, and upon which they now had grounded their objection to it.

I an.

SECT. CLV.

and the God of Jacob." And he had the highest authority for the expression; for *have ye not read in the book of Moses how God spake to him in the bush* by this title? and have ye not observed *what was* then in effect *spoken to you by God, saying* in express terms, "*I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*[f]?" *Now* certainly *God is not* to be called *the God* of them who are entirely destroyed, and left to continue in the state *of the dead, but the God of* those who may be yet considered as *the living:* nor would he ever own the high relation of a God to those whom he finally abandons, and suffers to sink into nothing; much less would what he did for the holy patriarchs, whose names he commemorated with so much honour, answer such a title, since he left them exposed to so many trials and calamities, which multitudes escape of whom he has never spoken in such language: *so that* those good men must be considered as still in existence; and therefore it may be concluded, by a strong train of consequences that *all* the faithful *live unto him*[g]; for he, on the foot of Abraham's covenant, owns himself the God of all such: and consequently he

Luke XX. 37.

God spake unto him [that which was spoken unto you by God], saying, I [am] the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?] [MAT. XXII. 31, 32.—MARK XII. 26.

38 For [God is not a God of the dead, but [MARK, the God] of the living; for all live unto him: [MARK, Ye therefore do greatly err.] [MAT. XXII.—32. MARK XII.—27.]

[f] *I am the God of Abraham, &c.*] It is surprising to me to find learned men so much divided in their sentiments on this easy text. The force of the argument cannot surely rest on the word [*am*]; because though it be in the *Greek*, it is not in the *Hebrew*, where the words may possibly signify, *I* [*have been*] *the God of Abraham, &c.* and the possibility of such a *version* would affect the conclusion on that supposition. But *our Lord's* argument is equally forcible either way; for it is evident, that it cannot properly be said, that God either actually *is*, or *hath been*, the God of any whom he has suffered finally to perish: and (as the *apostle* strongly intimates) he would, humanly speaking, *be ashamed*, or think it infinitely beneath him, to own that relation to any for whom he had not *provided a city*, or a state of more permanent happiness than any which could be enjoyed in this mortal life. (See Heb. xi. 16.) So that the argument by no means turns (as Archbishop Tillotson and Grotius suppose) on the calamitous circumstances in which these patriarchs often were; but would have held good, had all their lives been as prosperous and glorious as that of Abraham seems generally, notwithstanding his peregrinations, to have been.—] cannot, as some modern writers of note do, fall in with Mr. *Mede's* notion, (in his *Works*, p. 801, 802), that *our Lord* refers to the necessity of Abraham's being *raised from the dead* to *inherit Canaan*, in order to the accomplishment of God's *promise* to give it to *him*; both because I can see no such necessity, and because then I think it would have been much more to *our Lord's* purpose to have quoted the *promise* of the land of Canaan, than these general words.

[g] *So that all* the faithful *live unto him.*] It is evident that γαρ must here have the force of an *illative particle*, and may be rendered [*therefore*], or [*so that*]; for what it introduces is plainly the main proposition to be proved, and not an argument for what immediately went before. In this connection the consequence is apparently just; for as *all the faithful* are the children of Abraham, and the Divine promise of being *a God to him and his seed* is entailed upon them, it will prove their continued existence and happiness in a future state, as much as Abraham's. And, as the body, as well as the soul, makes an essential part of man, it will prove both his *resurrection* and theirs, and entirely overthrow the whole Sadducean doctrine on this head.

[h] *After*

he must be an everlasting patron and friend to them, even to their whole persons, so as to recover their mortal part from the ruin and desolation of the grave. And *therefore*, on the whole, *you greatly err*, in denying this doctrine; and your error tends to bring a disgrace on the whole series of Divine revelation, and to weaken one of the strongest motives to a life of holiness and obedience. SECT. CLV. Luke XX. 38.

39 Then certain of the scribes answering, said, Master, thou hast well said.

Then some of the scribes who were present, being of the sect of the Pharisees, were pleased to hear a doctrine of their own so judiciously defended, and *said in reply, Master, thou hast spoken so well* upon this subject, that nothing solid can be objected to thy discourse. 39

MAT. XXII. 33.—And when the multitude heard *this* they were astonished at his doctrine.

And indeed *when* all *the multitude* that was present in the temple at that time *heard* [*this*] unthought of, yet convincing, argument, together with so clear an answer to a cavil in which the Sadducees used to triumph as invincible, *they were* greatly *astonished at his doctrine*, and plainly testified the admiration and delight with which they had attended his discourse. Mat. XXII. 33

LUKE XX. 40. And after that, they durst not ask him any question at all.

And as the Sadducees had nothing to reply, they were ashamed and disappointed; *and after that they durst not* any more presume to *ask him any thing at all*[h], but retired in silence and confusion. Luke XX. 40

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH what satisfaction should we read this vindication of so important an article of our faith and hope! Easily was this boasted argument of the *Sadducees* unravelled and exposed, and all the pride of those bold wits, who valued themselves so much on that imaginary penetration which laid men almost on a level with brutes, covered with just confusion. Indeed objections against the *resurrection*, much more plausible than this of theirs, may be answered in that one saying *of our Lord's: Ye know not the scriptures, nor the power of God.* Were the *scripture doctrine* of the *resurrection* considered on the one hand, and the *omnipotence* of the *Creator* on the other, it could not seem *incredible* to any *that God should raise the dead.* (Acts xxvi. 8.) Mat. xxii. 23—28 29

How sublime an idea does *our Lord* give us of the happiness of those who shall be *thought worthy* to attain it! *They shall be equal to* Luke xx. 35, 36

[h] *After that, they durst not ask him any thing at all.*] It is evident that this is meant of the Sadducees, and must be understood as limited to them; because in the very *next section* we read of a question which *one of the scribes* put to him.

SECT. CLV.

to the angels! Adored be the riches of that grace which redeems us from this degenerate and miserable state, in which we had made ourselves so much *like the beasts that perish* (Psal. xlix. 12) to raise us to so high a dignity, and marshal us with the armies of heaven!

Ver. 35, 36

34 Let us esteem so glorious a hope aright, and with the greatest intenseness of soul pursue and insure it. And as for those *enjoyments* of this present world, which are suited only to the mortality and imperfection of it, let us moderate our regards to them, and cultivate those higher entertainments with the most solicitous care, which will be transplanted into the paradise of God, and ever flourish for the delight of his *immortal children.*

37 *Christ*, we see, argues a very important point of doctrine from *premises*, in which, perhaps, we might not have been able to have discovered it without such a hint. Let us learn to judge of *scripture arguments*, not merely by the sound, but by the sense of the words. And as *our Lord* chose a passage from the *Pentateuch*, rather than from the *prophets*, for the conviction of the *Sadducees*, let us be engaged to study the tempers, and even the prejudices, of those with whom we converse; that we may, if possible, let in the light of Divine truth on their hearts on that side by which they seem most capable of receiving it.

Mark xii. 26

In a word, let us with pleasure think of the blessed God under that gracious title by which he manifested himself to *Moses at the bush.* Still he is *the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; the God* of our pious ancestors, the *God* of all our departed friends who are now *sleeping in Jesus:* for *all* their souls now *live unto him*, and their bodies shall ere long be awakened by him. In like manner, if *we* are *followers of them who through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises*, when we are *gathered to our fathers*, and our names, perhaps, forgotten among succeeding generations, he will still be *our God.* He will shew us, by the blessed experience of eternity, that when he treated with us by that title, and admitted us into the covenant by which he bears it, he intended for us something far nobler and better than the transient scenes of earth and of time could admit.

Luke xx. 38

SECT.

SECT. CLVI.

Christ discourses of the first and great command of the law, and confounds the Pharisees with a question relating to David's calling the Messiah his Lord. Mat. XXII. 34, *to the end.* Mark XII. 28—37. Luke XX. 41—44.

MAT. XXII. 34.
BUT when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

MAT. XXII. 34.

THUS Jesus defended the great doctrine of the resurrection from the vain cavils which were brought against it. *But* the debates of the day ended not here; for *when the Pharisees heard that he had* thus *silenced* and confounded *the Sadducees, they were* soon *gathered together* again, with a malicious view of carrying on the same design, to try if they could any way expose him to the people, and to make their remarks upon what he might say. SECT. CLVI. Mat. XXII. 34

35 Then one [of the scribes, *which was* a lawyer, [came and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well,] asked [him] a question tempting him, and saying, [MARK XII. 28.—]

And one of the learned *scribes* [*who was*] also *a doctor of the law, came* with the rest; *and having* attended to the discourse between Jesus and the Sadducees, and *heard them reasoning together, perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him a* farther *question;* intending *to make* another *trial of him* as to his understanding in the sacred books; *and said* to him, *Master,* 35

36 Master, which [is] the [first *and*] great commandment [of all] in the law? [MARK XII.—28.]

I desire thou wouldst inform me *which is the first* [*and*] *great commandment of all* that are contained *in the* whole *law*[a]? Is it a ceremonial, or a moral precept, that is the most important, and deserves the preference? 36

MARK XII. 29. And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; [MAT. XXII. 37.—]

And Jesus answered him, The question thou hast put may easily be resolved; for *surely the first,* that is, the most comprehensive and important *of all the commandments* of the law, [*is*] that which is contained in Deut. vi. 4, 5. x. 12. "*Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is* the *one* great Mark XII. 29.

[a] *Which is the first and great commandment,* &c.] This was a point that often was disputed by the *Jewish doctors*; some contending for the law of *circumcision,* others for that of *sacrifices,* and others for that of the *phylacteries.* And though it was a rule among them, that the law of the *sabbath,* was to give place to that of *circumcision,* yet they were not agreed as to the rest, which was the principal and most important precept, only in general they were inclined to give the preference to the *ceremonial* part.—Dr. *Lightfoot* remarks (in his *Hor. Hebr.* on Mark xii. 28,) that Christ answers the scribe out of a sentence which was written in the *phylacteries;* in which he avoided all occasion of offence, and plainly shewed (as the *scribe* afterwards observes, Mark xii. 33. that the observance of the *moral law* was more acceptable to God than all the *sacrifices* they could offer to him.

SECT. CLVI.

great and only *Lord;* *And* upon all occasions *thou shalt* regard and honour him as such, and *love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength;*" that is, thou shalt consecrate to him all the united powers and faculties of thy nature; and thy understanding and will, thine affections and executive powers, shall be all in the most vigorous manner employed in his service. (See note [c] on Luke x. 27. sect. cvii.) *This is the first and great commandment*, the principal and fundamental precept of the law, and there is no other which may not be considered in its degree as subordinate to this, and reducible to it. *And the second*, in its sublime and comprehensive nature, [*is*] much *like unto it*, as well as given by the same authority [b], [*even*] *this* contained in Lev. xix. 18. "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:*" For all the duties you owe to your fellow-creatures may be reduced to this; and where this undissembled and generous principle of love is, the rest will easily and naturally follow. On the whole, therefore, *there is no other commandment greater than these.* And indeed I may say, that *all the law and the prophets depend upon these two commandments;* that is, it is the design of the whole revelation, in its different periods and circumstances, to promote that virtuous and holy temper which may be expressed by the love of God and our neighbour.

Mark XII. 30.

Mat. XXII. 40.

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first [and great commandment. [MAT. XXII. — 37, 38.]

31 And the second is like [unto it], *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: there is none other commandment greater than these. [MAT. XXII. 39.]

MAT. XXII. 40. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Mark XII. 32.

And the scribe who had proposed the question with a design to try him, was struck with the solidity and spirit of his answer, and *said to him*, *Truly* thou deservest to be owned as a *Master* in Israel; for *thou hast spoken* to this important question excellently *well:*[c] *for there is* indeed *one God, and there is no other beside him: And to love him*, as thou hast said, *with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength*, to consecrate all the

MARK XII. 32. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God, and there is none other but he:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the

[b] *The second is like unto it.*] By quoting this with the former he sufficiently guarded against a foolish notion, which some say the Pharisees had, that the observation of one excellent precept of the law would excuse the transgression of many others. It is certain the Pharisees were ready to magnify duties of the *first table*, to the neglect of those of the *second*; on which account it was exceedingly proper to use such language as this.

[c] Excellently *well.*] It is in the *original* καλως, *beautifully*, or *finely*, which expresses his high satisfaction in the reply much more strongly than the word *well.*

[d] *How*

the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

the intellectual and active powers of our whole nature to him; *and* for a man *to love* [*his*] *neighbour as himself*, from a sense of piety to God, as well as benevolence to man, *is* far *more* important *than all* the *burnt-offerings and sacrifices* which the greatest prince could present at his altar; nor could the most exact and pompous ritual observances be acceptable without such virtues and graces as these. SECT. CLVI. Mat. XXII. 33

34 — And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.—

And Jesus, seeing that he answered thus *wisely*, *said unto him*, It appears from these just sentiments of thine on this important head, that *thou art not far from the kingdom of God*; and such views of religion as these, may be the happy means of preparing thee to receive the gospel in that fuller manifestation of it which is now approaching 34

MAT. XXII. 41. [And] while the Pharisees were gathered together [while he taught in the temple,] Jesus asked them, saying, How say the scribes, that Christ is the Son of David;] [MARK XII. 35. LUKE XX. 41.]

And while the Pharisees were gathered together during this conference, expecting to have found an opportunity to ensnare him, *as he was* still *teaching* the people *in the temple*, *Jesus* turned to the scribes and doctors of the law who were present, and *asked them*, *saying*, *How say the scribes* so commonly as they do, *that the Messiah is the Son of David?* Let me ask you of that profession who are now here, *What think ye concerning the Messiah* in this respect? *Whose Son is he? They say unto him*, Nothing can be plainer than what thou representest as the general opinion: he is undoubtedly to be [*the Son*] *of David*. *He saith unto them*, *How then does David himself*, speaking *by the* inspiration of the *Holy Spirit*, *in the book of Psalms*, acknowledge him to be superior to himself, and *call him Lord*[d]? for you cannot but know that there is a passage expressly to this purpose, (Psal. cx. 1.) which you readily allow to refer to the Messiah, in which you find David *saying*, "*The Lord said unto my Lord*, *Sit thou on my right hand* in exalted power and glory, with all the majesty and honour of a King, *till I make* all *thine enemies thy footstool*, and cause thee to trample upon Mat. XXII. 41 42 43 44

42 What think ye of Christ? whose Son is he? They say unto him, *The Son* of David.

43 He saith unto them, How then doth David [himself] in spirit [*or* by the Holy Ghost] [LUKE, in the book of Psalms] call him Lord, saying, [MARK XII. 36.— LUKE XX. 42.—

44 The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right-hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool? [MARK XII.—36.] LUKE XX. 42, 43.

d *How then does David himself by the Holy Spirit*, &c.) *Our Lord*, we see, always takes it for granted, in his arguments with the Jews, that the *writers* of the *Old Testament* were under such an extraordinary guidance of the Holy Spirit as to express themselves with the strictest propriety on all occasions. (Compare John x. 35. sect. cxxxiv.) And I look on this as no contemptible argument for the *inspiration* of the *New Testament*; for we can never think the *apostles* of Christ to have been less assisted by the Divine Spirit in their *writings*, when they were in other respects so much more powerfully endowed with it.

sect. cvii. upon them at pleasure." *If David himself therefore call him Lord*, and speak of him as his superior, as you see he doth, *how is he then his* Mat. XXI. 45 *Son*[e]?

45 If David [himself] then call him Lord, how is he LUKE then] his Son? [And the common people heard him gladly.] MARK XX. 37. LUKE XX. 44.

Now as the scribes and Pharisees were ignorant of the great doctrine of the Divine nature of the Messiah, with respect to which, even before his incarnation, he was the Lord of David, and of the whole church, they were quite confounded with the question. *And the* vast crowd of *common people* that was about him *heard him* 46 *with* great *pleasure*. *And* all his adversaries were at such a loss, that *no man could answer him* so much as *a word; neither did any one presume, from that day forward, to ask him any more* such ensnaring *questions*[f] as those by which they had now contrived to assault, and, if possible, to confound him.

46 And no man was able to answer him a word: neither durst any man (from that day forth) ask him any more questions [MARK XII.—34.

IMPROVEMENT.

Mark xii. 28. WHATEVER might be the design of the *scribe* in putting this *question to Christ* again (which was in effect the same with what another had proposed before, (Luke x. 25. sect. cvii.) we have reason to rejoice in the repetition of so important an *answer*. Oh that it might be inscribed on our hearts as with the point of a diamond!

29 *The first and great commandment* requires us to *love the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and strength*; and *the second, which is like unto it*, to *love our neighbour as ourselves*. But alas, what reason have we to complain of our own deficiency on both these heads! and how much *need of being taught again* even these *first principles of the oracles of God!* (Heb. v. 12.)

30 Can we say, with regard to *the first*, that the blessed God has the whole of our hearts? Is the utmost vigour of our faculties exerted in his service? Do we make him the end of all our actions, of all our wishes, of all our pursuits?—Or are we indeed such 31 equitable judges between ourselves and others as *the second* of these

[e] *If David himself therefore call him Lord, how is he then his Son?*] This implies both the existence of David in a future state, and the authority of the Messiah over that invisible world into which that prince was removed by death. Else, how great a Monarch soever the Messiah might have been, he could not have been properly called David's Lord, any more than Julius Cæsar could have been called *the Lord of Romulus*, because he reigned in Rome 700 years after his death, and vastly extended the bounds of that empire which Romulus founded.——Munster's *Note* on this text shews, in a very forcible manner, the wretched expedients of some *modern Jews* to evade the force of that interpretation of the 110th Psalm which refers it to the Messiah.

[f] *Presume from that day forward to ask him any more questions.*] The plain meaning is, they asked him no more such *captious questions*; for the memory of this confusion impressed their minds during the short remainder of Christ's continuance among them; and he was soon removed from them, so that they had no farther opportunities of doing it when that impression wore off.

these *great commandments* would require; so as to seek our own particular interests no farther than they may be subservient to, or at least consistent with, the good of the whole? Do we make all those allowances for others which we expect or desire they should make for us?—Surely we must own we are far from having *yet attained*, or from being *already perfect*. (Phil. iii. 12.)—But if this be not in the main the prevailing and governing temper of our minds, in vain are our *burnt-offerings* and our *sacrifices;* in vain are all the solemnities of public worship, or the forms of domestic and secret devotion; and by all our most pathetic expressions of duty to God, and friendship to men, we do but add one degree of guilt to another. Let us then most earnestly entreat that God would have mercy upon us, and by his Holy Spirit *write these laws in our hearts.*

SECT. CLVI. Ver. 31, 33

On these subjects let *scribes instructed to the kingdom of heaven* insist, lest they be condemned by *this expositor* of the *Jewish law* And let those whose notions are thus *wisely* regulated, take heed, lest, while they seem *near to the kingdom of God*, by resting in mere notions, they come short of it, and sink into a ruin aggravated by their near approach to the confines of salvation and glory. 32, 34

As for that *question* of *Christ* with which the *Pharisees* were perplexed, the gospel has given us a key to it. Well might *David*, *in spirit, call him Lord*, who *according to the flesh* was to descend from his loins: for *before David* or *Abraham was, he is.* (John viii. 58.) Let us adore this mysterious union of the *Divine* and *human natures* in the person of our glorious *Emmanuel;* and be very careful that we do not oppose him, if we would not be found *fighters against God.* Already is he *exalted at the right hand of the Father:* let his *friends* rejoice in his dignity and glory, and with pleasure wait the day of his complete triumph, when *all his enemies shall be put under his feet*, and even *the last* of them be *swallowed up in victory.* (1 Cor. xv. 25, 54.)

Mat. xxii. 41—43, 44

SECT. CLVII.

Christ discourses with the Pharisees in the temple, repeating the charges and cautions which he had formerly advanced at the house of one of that sect. Mat. XXIII. 1—22. Mark XII. 38—40. Luke XX. 45, *to the end.*

MAT. XXIII. 1. THEN spake Jesus [in his doctrine], [LUKE, in the audience of all the people, unto

MAT. XXIII. 1.

SECT. CLVII. Mat. XXIII. 1

THEN Jesus, in the progress of *his doctrine* and discourse, *spake to his disciples in the audience of all the people* who were present, and took occasion (as he had done formerly, Luke xi. 39, & seq. sect. cx.) to expose and caution them

SECT. civii.

them against the pride and hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, *Saying* openly and freely to them, *The scribes and the Pharisees sit*

Mat. XXIII. 2 *in the chair of Moses*[a], and are the public 3 teachers and expounders of his law: *All therefore whatsoever they shall charge you to observe* in virtue of that law[b], pay a becoming deference and regard to, and be ready to *observe and do* accordingly; *but practise not* by any means *according to their works: for they say* well in many instances, *but do not* themselves *practise* according to what they teach.

Mark XII. 38 Mat. XXIII. 4 I therefore repeat it again, *Beware* of imitating the hypocrisy, and following the example, *of the scribes*[c]; *For* by virtue of the traditions which in conjunction with the Pharisees they have added to the law, *they bind* together *grievous and insupportable burdens, and* without the least remorse *lay them on men's shoulders*, urging them by the heaviest penalties to conform to all their injunctions; *but they* dispense with [*themselves*] in the neglect of many of them, and *will not* so much as *move them with a finger of theirs.* (Compare Luke xi. 46, sect. cx.)

5 *And* even when they do conform in other instances to their own rules, it is generally from a bad principle; for there is none of *all their works*

unto his disciples,] [MARK XII. 38.—LUKE XX. 45.]

2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

3 All therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

MARK XII.—38.—Beware of the scribes: [LUKE XX. 46.—]

MAT. XXIII. 4. For they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries,

[a] *Sit in the chair of Moses.*] Some think here is an allusion to those *pulpits* which Ezra made for the expounders of the law (Neh. viii. 4.) and which were afterwards continued in the synagogue, from whence the rabbies delivered their discourses *sitting*. It is probably called *Moses' chair*, because it was that from whence the *books of Moses* were read and explained; so that he seemed to dictate from thence. It is strange that *Lightfoot (Hor. Heb. in loc.)* and Gussatus, should explain this of a *legislative authority*; since the *scribes* and *Pharisees*, as such, had no peculiar authority of that kind.

[b] In virtue of that law.] If this limitation be not supposed, this passage will be inconsistent with all those in which he condemns the doctrines of the *scribes* and *Pharisees*. Had he meant (as Orobio, and some *Popish* writers have unaccountably pretended) to assert *their infallibility*, and to require an absolute submission to their dictates, he must have condemned himself, as it was known he was rejected by them. See *Limborch. Collat. Amic.* p. 58, 114.

[c] *Beware of the scribes.*] The word *scribe* in general signifies any one conversant about books and writings; and is sometimes put for a *civil officer*, whose business probably resembled that of a *Secretary of state* (2 Sam. viii. 17. 1 Kings iv. 3. 2 Kings xix. 2.) at other times it is used at large for a man of learning and ability (1 Chron. xxvii. 32. Jer. xxxvi. 26 Ezra vii. 6. Mat. xxiii. 34. 1 Cor. i. 20.) But as *biblical learning* was most esteemed among the Jews, the word in the *New Testament* seems to be chiefly appropriated to those that applied themselves to the study of the *law* (perhaps including those whose business it was to transcribe it.) Of these the public professors, who read lectures upon it, were called *doctors*, or *lawyers*; and, probably, they who were invested with some public offices in the *sanhedrim*, or other courts, *scribes of the people* (Mat. ii. 4.)—But that the *scribes*, as *Trigland* labours to prove *(de Secta Karreor.* p. 68*)* were karaites, or textuaries, who rejected those *traditions* which the Pharisees inculcated, seems, from this text especially, utterly improbable. *Our Lord* commonly joins them with the Pharisees, and probably most of them were of that *sect.*

[d] *They*

ries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.

works but what *they* chiefly *do* with a design *to be viewed* and taken notice of *by men*, as examples of extraordinary piety. For this purpose, in particular, *they make their phylacteries* remarkably *broad*[d], that it may be thought they write more of the law on those scrolls of parchment than others do, or desire to be more frequently reminded of Divine things by the size of them; *and*, for the same reason likewise, they *make the fringes* and tassels, which the law requires them to wear on the borders *of their garments*, as *large* as may be, that they may seem peculiarly desirous to remember the Divine commandments whenever they look upon them. (Compare Numb. xv. 38—40.)

sect. clvii.

Mat. XXIII. 5

Luke XX.—46.—Which desire to walk in long robes;—[Mark XII.—39,—]

Mat. XXIII. 6. And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the [Luke, highest] seats in the synagogues, [Mark XII. 39. Luke XX.—46.]

These are the self-conceited and vain glorious men, *who affect to walk in long garments*, that they may appear with an air of distinguished gravity and stateliness; *And love the uppermost places at feasts*, where guests of the first quality are used to sit; *and* are ambitious to secure *the highest seats* even *in the* very *synagogues*[e], where they should meet to prostrate themselves in the Divine presence with the lowest abasement of soul: *And*, on the same principle of vain-glory and ostentation, they desire to receive *salutations in the markets*, and other places of common concourse (compare Luke xi. 43. sect. cx.) *and to be called by men, Rabbi, rabbi*[f]; a title of honour

Luke XX. 46

Mat. XXIII. 6

7 And [salutations] in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi,

7

d *They make their phylacteries* remarkably *broad.*] I doubt not but most of my readers very well know that the Jews (understanding Exod. xiii. 9, 16. and Deut. vi. 8. xi. 18. which commanded them to *bind the law on their heads*, and to let it be *as frontlets between their eyes*, in a literal sense) used to wear little *scrolls of parchment*, on which those passages were written, bound to their *foreheads* and *wrists*. It is generally supposed they were called *phylacteries* in *Greek*, as being looked upon as a kind of *amulet* to keep them from danger. See *Serrar. Tribær.* p. 38; and *Drus. de tribus sectis*, p. 263, 266.

e *The highest seats in the synagogues.*] The *doctors* had *seats* by themselves, with their backs towards the pulpit in which the law was read, and their faces towards the people. These were accounted the most honourable; and therefore these ambitious *scribes* and *Pharisees* contended for them. See *Reland. Antiq. Heb.* p. 61; *Vitring. de Synag. Vet.* p. 191, *& seq;* and *Wolf. in loc.*

f *To be called by men, Rabbi, rabbi.*] Many learned men have observed that an extravagant notion of respect went along with *this title*, which was derived from רבו, a word which signifies both *magnitude* and *multitude*, and seems intended very emphatically to express both the *greatness* and the *variety* of that learning which they who bore it were supposed to be possessed of (*L'Enfant's Introd.* p. 98.)—Dr. *Lightfoot* tells us (*Hor. Heb. in loc.*) that the words of the *scribes* are declared to be more amiable and weighty than those of the *prophets*, and equal to those of the *law*: so that Gamaliel advised to get a *rabbi*, that one might no longer doubt of any thing. More passages to this purpose may be seen in Dr. *Gale's Sermons*, Vol. I. p. 80, and in *Whitby* and *Elsner*, in *loc.* They fully shew the necessity there was for such repeated cautions as *our Lord* gives, and are an abundant answer to what Orobio objects to *our Lord's* conduct in this respect (see *Limborch. Collat.* p. 119); for, considering their inveterate prejudices against Christ, it could never be supposed that the common people would receive the gospel till such corrupt teachers as these were brought into a just disgrace.

SECT. CLVII. honour which they are fond of having repeated in every sentence, and almost at every word.

Mat. XXIII. 8 *But* as for you, my disciples, *be not you called Rabbi*, nor value yourselves on the name, if it should ever happen to be given you; *for one is your Master*, [*even*] *Christ; and ye are all brethren*[g], and as such should treat each other with

9 a loving freedom and familiarity. *And call not* [*any one*] *on earth your father*[h], nor be fond of receiving this title from men, who may be ready to speak of themselves as but children in comparison of you, and implicitly to follow all your dictates; *for one is your Father*, and that of the whole family, [*even*] *he* who dwells *in* the highest *heaven*, and before whom all the most distinguished honours of the children of men disappear, as less than nothing and vanity.

10 *Neither be ye called masters* and guides; *for one is your* great *Master* and Instructor, [*even*] *Christ*[i], whose dictates you are ever to receive, and in whose name and authority alone you are to teach

11 others. *But*, on the contrary, *he that is*, and would appear in the eyes of God to be, the *greatest among you, shall be* most eminent for condescension and humility, and will be ready to wait on the rest, and to behave himself on all occasions as *your servant*. (Compare Mat. xx. 26,

12 27. p. 135.) *And* what I have often told you will assuredly be found to be a certain truth, That *whosoever shall* attempt in an ambitious way to *exalt himself, shall* sooner or later, by one method or another, *be abased; and whosoever*, on the other hand, *shall humble himself, shall be exalted* to the highest honour[k].

13 Then Jesus, turning from his disciples, to whom

bi, rabbi. [MARK XII. —38. LUKE XX.—46.—]

8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ, and all ye are brethren.

9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father which *is* in heaven.

10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ.

11 But he that is greatest among you, shall be your servant.

12 And whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted.

13 But wo unto you scribes

g *Ye are all brethren.*] It is observable, that not one word is said of *Peter's authority* over the rest, either here, or on the application made by *Zebedee's children*; though had such an authority been intended, nothing could have been more natural, or necessary, than to have mentioned and adjusted it. Compare *note* g on Mat. xx. 26. p. 135.

h *Call not* [*any one*] *on earth your father.*] The *Pharisees*, no doubt, had *this title* given them; and Bishop Wilkins observes, that it is a title which assuming *priests* of all religions have greatly affected.

i *One is your Master*, [*even*] *Christ.*] It is remarkable that this occurs twice in the very same words (here, and in ver. 8.) *Our Lord* knew how requisite it would be to attend to it, and how ready even his *ministers* would be to forget it.

k *Whosoever shall exalt himself*, &c.] Christ seems by the frequent repetition of this *maxim* to intimate that he intended it, not only for those who were to be *teachers* of others, but for *all his disciples* without exception. And it is well worthy of our observation that no one sentence of *our Lord's* is so frequently repeated as *this*; which occurs at least *ten times* in the *evangelists*. Compare Mat. xviii. 4. xx. 26, 27. xxiii. 10, 11. Mark ix. 35. x. 43, 44. Luke xiv. 11. xviii. 14. xxii. 26. and John xiii. 14.

l *Hypocrites.*]

scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

whom he had hitherto been speaking, addressed himself boldly to those crafty enemies who stood around him, waiting for nothing *but* an opportunity of mischief, and said, *Wo unto you, ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites*[1]*! for* by the prejudices you are so zealous to propagate among the people, *you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men*, and do all you can to prevent their regarding it; *for you neither go in yourselves, nor permit them that are* awakened to a desire of *entering, to go in*; and thus you make yourselves in some degree chargeable with their destruction as well as with your own, by the false notions you instil into their minds, and the prejudices you raise against me and my doctrine. (Compare Luke xi. 52, sect. cx.)

SECT. CLVII.

Mat. XXIII. 13

14 Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows houses, and for a pretense make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. [MARK XII. 40. LUKE XX. 47.]

Wo unto you, ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, that impose upon men by specious forms of devotion! but these forms cannot impose upon God, nor prevent his vengeance from falling heavy upon you: *for*, by your cruel extortions *you devour the houses of widows* and orphans, whose helpless circumstances, if you had any remains of humanity and generosity, might rather engage you to protect and vindicate them; *and* it is only *for a pretence* to cover these crying immoralities, that you *make* such *long* and seemingly earnest *prayers*, hoping thereby to engage the esteem and confidence of others, that you may have the greater opportunity to injure and defraud them: but this complicated wickedness shall cost you dear; for *therefore shall you receive greater* and more dreadful *damnation*, than if you had never prayed at all, nor made any pretences to religion.

14

15 Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Wo unto you, ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites as you are! *for* with indefatigable industry *you* do, as it were, *compass the sea and the land to make one proselyte* to your own particular sect and party; *and when he is become* [*so*], *you* often *make him* even *doubly more a child of hell than* you *yourselves* are; while, in order to approve the sincerity of his conversion to you, he is obliged to vie with you in all the excesses of your superstition and bigotry.

15

Wo

1 *Hypocrites.*] Dr. *More* with great propriety observes, that the word *hypocrites* [ὑποκριταὶ] in its most exact application, signifies *players*, who according to the unnatural custom of the ancients, *acted a part under a mask. More's Theolog. Works*, p. 293.

SECT. clvii.

Mat. XXIII.

Wo unto you, ye blind guides, who have invented so many nice distinctions, to make men easy in their sins, and subservient to your secular interests! *who say,* for instance, *Whosoever* 16 *shall swear* only *by the temple, it is nothing* [m]; *but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple,* whether by that with which a part of it is overlaid, or by that which is laid up in its trea- 17 sures, *he is obliged* by it. *Ye foolish and blind* [*creatures*], is not the stupid sophistry of this distinction apparent to the weakest understanding? *for which* of these *is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifies the gold,* which without its relation to the temple would have nothing in it 18 more sacred than any common metal? *And* ye also say, just with the same degree of sense and piety as before, *Whosoever shall swear* only *by the altar* of God, *it is nothing; but whoever shall swear by the gift which is upon it, he is ob-* 19 *liged* to the performance of his oath. *Ye foolish and blind* [*wretches*], what an idle and senseless distinction is this? *for which* can you suppose *is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifies the gift,* which, before it was brought thither, was only a common thing, and might be used to any 20 of the ordinary purposes of human life? The truth of the case is *therefore* plain and obvious: *he that swears by the altar, swears* in effect *by it, and by all* the *things* that are offered *upon it* to 21 him whose altar it is: *And he that swears by the temple, swears by it, and by him* also *that dwells in it,* even the eternal and ever-blessed Jehovah, who honours it in a special manner with the 22 tokens of his presence: *And he that swears by heaven,* which some of you are foolish enough to think a little oath, *swears by the throne of* the most high *God, and by him who sits upon it,* and fills all the train of attendant angels with the humblest reverence and prostration of mind. Now did you and your disciples consider this, that every oath by a creature is an implicit appeal to God, you could not surely talk of such expressions in so light and dangerous a manner as you commonly do.

16 Wo unto you, ye blind guides! which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor.

17 Ye fools, and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

18 And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing: but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

19 Ye fools, and blind: for whether *is* greater the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar sweareth by it and by all things thereon.

21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

22 And he that shall swear by heaven sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

IMPROVE-

m *Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing.*] It seems the Pharisees taught, that *oaths by the creatures* might be used on trifling occasions, and violated without any great guilt (see *note* h on Mat. v. 34, Vol. VI. p. 213. But they excepted *ooths* by the *corban,* and by *sacrifices;* in which it is plain that, without any regard to common sense or decency, they were influenced merely by a view to their own interest; and therefore represented *these* to the people as things of more eminent sanctity than even the *temple* or *altar* itself.

IMPROVEMENT.

As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear (Prov. xxv. 12). *Christ* was indeed a *wise* and faithful *Reprover;* but the *ears* of these *Pharisees* were disobedient and *uncircumcised.* Let *us*, however, who are *his disciples*, attend to these instructions of our heavenly Master, and avoid every thing which has the remotest tendency to what he here condemns with so just a severity. SECT. CLVII. Mat. XXIII. 1, & *seq.*

Let not our zeal spend itself upon the *externals* of religion. Let us not impose *heavy burdens* upon each other; nor lay down rules for the conduct of others, by which we do not in like circumstances think fit to govern ourselves. Let us not impose our own *decisions* in a magisterial manner on our *fellow Christians*, nor affect to be *called fathers*, *masters*, and *teachers;* remembering that *Christ alone is our Master*, and *God our Father*, and that it is a dangerous presumption and folly to set ourselves in the place of either. Let us be upon our guard against that *vain ostentation* that would lead us to place any part of our happiness in *precedence*, and to value ourselves upon our *rank*, or upon any airy *titles of honour*, by which, perhaps rather by accident than merit, we are distinguished from others; and which to a truly wise man, and especially to a humble follower of *Jesus*, will appear to be a very little matter. Let us desire *that honour* which arises from condescending to others, and serving them in love; *that honour* which springs from the *Divine approbation*, which it will be impossible to secure without unaffected piety. (John v. 44.) 5 4 8—10 6, 7 7 11, 12

God forbid that our *devotions* should ever be intended as a *cloak of maliciousness*, or as the instrument of serving any mean and vile purpose! Such *prayers* would return in *curses* on our own heads, and draw down on them *aggravated damnation.* God forbid that we should spend that time, and that ardency of spirit, in *making proselytes* to our own peculiar notions and party, which ought to be laid out in making them the *servants of God* through *Christ!* God forbid that we should delude ourselves or others by such idle *distinctions* in matters of conscience, as these which our blessed *Redeemer* has with so much reason and spirit exposed! 14 15 16

Let us retain the greatest reverence for an *oath*, and not accustom ourselves to *trifle* with any thing which looks like it. Let us consider *heaven* as *the throne of God*, and often think of the majesty and glory of that illustrious Being *that sits thereon;* for a sense of his continual presence will form us to a better temper, and engage us with a *righteousness* far *exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees*, to walk before him *in all his commandments and ordinances blameless.* 17--22

SECT. CLVIII.

Christ continues his discourse with the Pharisees, reproving them for their hypocrisy, and threatening them with approaching judgments. Mat. XXIII. 23, *to the end.*

MAT. XXIII. 23.

SECT. clviii.

OUR Lord farther proceeded in his discourse, and said, *Wo unto you, ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!* you may justly expect the se-

Mat. XXIII.

verest vengeance; *for ye* are careful to *tithe mint,*

23 *and anise, and cummin,* and every other common herb which grows in your gardens; *and* yet *have* wholly *neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and fidelity*[a]*: these* should chiefly have been regarded by you as what *ye ought* more especially *to have practised, and* indeed *not to have omitted the other,* as a reverent observance is due even to the least of God's commandments. (Compare Luke xi.

24 42, sect. cx.) *Ye blind guides* of blind and wretched followers, *who* do (as it is proverbially said) carefully *strain out a gnat* from the liquor you are going to drink, *and* yet can *swallow down a camel*[b]; you affect to scruple little things, and disregard those of the greatest moment.

25 *Wo unto you, ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish,* and are mighty exact in the observance of external rites and washings of the body; *but* are regardless of *the inner parts,* and unconcerned about your hearts and consciences, which *are full of* uncleanness, and of all kinds of *rapine and intemperance.* (Compare Luke xi. 39,

26 sect. cx.) *Thou blind* and senseless *Pharisee first* begin with the heart, and thereby, as it were, *cleanse*

MAT. XXIII. 23.

WO unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

25 Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup, and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which

a *Fidelity.*] The word πιστις has undoubtedly this signification in many places (compare Tit. ii. 10; Gal. v. 22; and Rom. iii. 3). But there are many more in which it signifies *the confidence reposed in another;* and it is of great importance to observe this. See Col. i. 4; and 1 Pet. i. 21.

b *Strain out a gnat, and swallow down a camel.*] In those hot countries, as *Serrarius* well observes. (*Trikæres.* p. 51), gnats were apt to fall into wine, if it were not carefully covered; and *passing the liquor through a strainer, that no gnat, or part of one, might remain, grew into a proverb* for exactness about little matters.—Could any authority be produced in which κωνωπα signifies *a large insect,* I should with great pleasure follow the *translation* of 1727, in rendering the latter clause, *swallow a beetle.*

c *Whited*

which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

cleanse the inside of the cup and of the dist, that thus *the outside of them may be clean also;* for the life will of course be reformed when the heart is purified.

SECT. clviii.

Mat. XXIII.

27 Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

Wo unto you, ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye resemble whited sepulchres, which indeed appear fair and *beautiful without*[c], *but within are full of the bones of the dead, and of all* that *uncleanness* which arises from their putrefying bodies.

27

28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Even so you also do indeed outwardly appear righteous unto men, who view nothing more than the external part of your character; *but* in the sight of an heart-searching God, who has a clear and perfect view of all that lies *within, you are full of* that *hypocrisy and iniquity* which is infinitely more loathsome to him than the most disagreeable objects can be to the human eye.

28

29 Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

Wo unto you, ye scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for, under a pretence of your regard and veneration for their characters, *you* sumptuously *build* up *the sepulchres of the* ancient *prophets, and adorn the monuments of the* other *righteous* men of former generations, as desirous to preserve and honour their memories[d]:

29

30 And say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

And ye *say, If we had been* living *in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the* holy *prophets* which they shed, but would have treated them in another manner than our fathers did.

30

31 Wherefore be ye witnesses unto yourselves

So that you really *bear witness to yourselves, that you are the sons*

31

[c] *Whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful without.*] Though the first intention of *whitening sepulchres* might be only to *mark them out*, that they might be avoided; and so (as some Jewish writers, and particularly Maimonides, have observed) a heap of *lime* laid upon the grave might answer the end; it is evident they were sometimes *adorned* (ver. 29), probably not only with *plaistering* and *white-washing*, but with *marble* and other *stone monuments:* and notwithstanding all the applause which *Vitringa (Observ. Sacr.* lib. i. p. 201) gives to the interpretation which Dr. *Lightfoot (Hor. Heb. in loc.)* and Dr. *Pocock (Port. Mos.* cap. v. p. 73) have advanced, I conclude that *such ornaments* were here referred to; for I cannot think Christ would have called these sepulchres *beautiful* if they had been nothing but *heaps of earth* covered with grass. Compare *note* e, on Luke xi. 44. sect. cx.

[d] *You build the sepulchres of the prophets,* &c.] I can by no means think, with *Markius (Exercit.* p. 229), many of whose criticisms are very low and fanciful, that *Christ here blames the building the sepulchres* of those holy men; which, as *Elsner* (Vol. I. p. 160) and *Raphelius (Annot. ex. Xen.* p. 48) shew, was a piece of respect which most nations have paid to persons of distinguished merit, especially to those that fell in a good cause. What *Vitringa (de Synag.* p. 221) tells us of the extraordinary honours paid to the *sepulchre* of Mordecai, is an agreeable illustration of these words. *Josephus* also, from Nicolaus Damascenus, mentions Herod's repairing in a very splendid manner the *sepulchre* of David. *(Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xvi. cap. 7 (al. 11), § 1.) Compare Acts ii. 29.——Grotius is certainly right in saying that the *four verses* in this paragraph are to be considered as *one sentence;* of which perhaps ver. 31 may be a *parenthesis.*

[e] *How*

SECT. CLVIII. Mat. XXIII.

sons of those that murdered the prophets; and indeed your present temper and conduct more certainly speaks you to be their genuine offspring, and to be full of that very malignity
31 which you pretend to condemn in them. (Com-
32 pare Luke xi. 47, 48. sect. cx.) *And do you [then] fill up,* as soon as you think fit, what yet remains to be completed of *the measure of your fathers'* sins, that wrath may come upon this guilty land to the uttermost.

selves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

33 *Ye* painted and deceitful *serpents, ye brood of* specious, but venomous and mischievous, *vipers,* how artfully soever you may evade human censures, *how can you* so much as hope, by any of these vain pretences, to *escape* what is infinitely more dreadful, that righteous sentence of the unerring Judge which will consign you over to *the damnation of hell*[c]? (Compare Mat. iii. 7. Vol. VI. p. 99.)

33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

34 *Therefore*[f], *behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes* instructed to the kingdom of heaven, to try you once more, and to give you the last call to repentance and reformation which you must ever expect: but I know that this last attempt will, with regard to the generality of you, be entirely in vain; *and* that *[some] of them ye will kill, and* carry your malice so far as to *crucify* them like common slaves; *and* when ye cannot effect that, *[some] of them ye will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute*
35 *[them] from city to city.* For thus will God in righteous judgment permit you to act, that ye may become the distinguished trophies of his displeasure, as if he were reckoning with you for the guilt of all former ages; so *that upon you may* seem to *come* the vengeance due for *all the righteous blood which has been poured forth on the earth* from the beginning of the world; even *from the blood of Abel, that* eminently *righteous man,* whom his brother Cain then slew, *to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Barachiah,* one of the

34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify, and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute *them* from city to city:

35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of

[c] *How can you* hope by any of these vain pretences to *escape* that sentence, &c.] *Raphelius* has abundantly proved that ἀποφυγειν κριμα (which is the same in sense with the *original*) properly signifies *to evade conviction* in a court of judicature, which is often done by the artifice of the criminal. *Annot. ex. Xen.* p. 50, 51.

[f] *Therefore.*] Though Olearius here would render διὰ τοῦτο *in the mean time,* the version is so unexampled that I cannot acquiesce in it; and if the connection, as it stands, could not be accounted for, I should think it better to connect *this phrase* with the close of the preceding verse: *How can ye escape the damnation of hell for this?* or avoid the judgment of God for this mixture of injustice, cruelty, and hypocrisy?

[g] *To*

of Zecharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!

SECT. clviii.

Mat. XXIII. 35

the last of the prophets, *whom ye murdered* while he was ministering *between the temple and the altar*[g], impiously presuming to intrude into the court of the priests, to perpetrate that most horrible murder as near as possible to God's most immediate presence. *Verily I say unto you,* 36 That even the guilt of all this righteous blood, and *all these things* that are included in the woes I have denounced, *shall come on this generation* of men; so dreadful are the calamities which God will shortly bring upon it. (Compare Luke xi. 49, 50, 51. sect. cx.)

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, [*thou*] *that killest the* 37 *prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee* by God for thy conversion and salvation; thou unhappy city, who hast so often been stained with the blood of the martyrs, that it is grown into a proverb, That a prophet can hardly perish any where else (Luke xiii. 33.) *how often would I have gathered thy children together* unto me, *even* with as much tenderness *as a hen gathereth her chickens together under her wings,* to protect them from the assaults of any bird of prey, or whatever else might threaten their safety, *and yet*

g *To the blood of Zechariah, the son of Barachiah,* &c.] Though very learned men have interpreted this of *four* different persons, I do not, with the learned and candid *Witsius* (*Misc.* Vol. I. p. 269), think it an inexplicable difficulty which of these is referred to. I scruple not, with Grotius, Drusius, Casaubon, Erasmus, and many more, to explain it of *that Zechariah* who is expressly said to have been *slain* in that remarkable manner *between the temple and the altar* (2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21), though I take not upon me to determine whether (as Chrysostom asserts) Jehoiada his father was also called Barachiah, which signifies *one that blesses the Lord,* as Jehoiada does *one that confesses him*; or whether the *original reading* was different from ours, as Jerom says he found in *the gospel of the Nazarenes,* or the *Hebrew version* of Matthew.—It is by no means necessary, with Cappellus, to allow that it was a slip in the *evangelist's* memory; but much more decent to suppose it an officious addition of some early *transcriber,* who might confound this martyr with *Zechariah,* one of the *twelve minor prophets,* who *was* indeed *the son of Barachiah,* but who does not by any means appear to have been murdered; nor is there any reason to imagine the Jews, so soon after their return from captivity, would have attempted so flagitious an act. —Though Theophylact understands the text of Zechariah the father of John the Baptist, on the credit of an idle tale of Origen's, confuted by Jerom, in which he tells us that this good man was *murdered in the temple* (see *Erasmus, in loc.*), he has had few followers; and indeed the story seems to have been made on the mistaken authority of the text in question.—Yet after all it seems still more unreasonable, with Archbishop *Tillotson* (Vol. I. p. 197, 198), to understand these words as a *prophecy* of that Zechariah, *the son of Baruch,* who, as *Josephus* says (*Bell. Jud.* lib. iv. cap. 5 (al. v. 1), § 4), was *assassinated in the middle of the temple,* just before the Romans besieged the city. Had we more evidence of *his* being *a righteous man,* it would be harsh to suppose Christ in such a connection to speak of a *future fact* as what was *already done*; or to charge that deed on the whole Jewish nation which was done, contrary to the decree of the *sanhedrim,* by two resolute villains. *All the martyrs from Abel to Zechariah,* seems to have been a *proverb*; and it might naturally arise from observing that Abel was the *first,* and Zechariah in Chronicles the *last* eminently *good man,* of whose *murder* the *scripture* speaks.

h *Till*

SECT. clviii.

yet ye would not hearken to my compassionate calls, but have hardened your hearts against my love, and repaid me with contempt, hatred, and persecution? *Behold,* the time is coming

Mat. XXIII. 38 when you will see your folly, though too late; for *your* sacred *house*, in which you vainly trust, even this magnificent temple in which you now stand, *is* so near being utterly destroyed, that it may be said to be even already *left desolate to you*, so that the few who survive the general carnage shall be forced to sit down and weep over its

39 ruins. For I am now making my last visit here, and *I say unto you*, That *henceforth*, since you treat me so ill, *ye shall not see me* any more, *till* even *ye shall say*, as the multitudes lately did, but with sublimer passions and nobler views, *Blessed* [*is*] *he that cometh in the name of the Lord*[h]; that is, till your calamities have taught you eagerly to wish for the Messiah, and Divine grace shall have inclined you, as a nation, gladly to receive me under that character; but you little think through what scenes of desolation, exile, and misery, you must pass for succeeding ages, before that happy time comes. (Compare Luke xiii. 34, 35, p. 18, 19.) And when he had thus spoken he went out of the temple.

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

IMPROVEMENT.

Mat. xxiii. 23 MAY we ever remember how necessary it is that our *righteousness* should *exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees*, if we desire to *enter into the kingdom of heaven!* (Mat. v. 20.) May our zeal be employed on the great *essentials* of religion, *justice*, *mercy*, and *fidelity*, and not be laid out merely or chiefly on the *circumstantials* of it!

25, 26 May we be concerned about the *purity of our hearts*, and not merely attend to the decency of our *external behaviour!* May we be,

h *Till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh,* &c.] This was doubtless spoken after Christ's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem (though Heinsius most unnaturally supposes it transplaced), which shews the necessity of giving the words some such turn as they have in the *paraphrase*.—If we might be allowed, with Grotius, to translate ὡς ἂν εἴπητε, *till ye would be glad to say*, or *wish you had said, Blessed is he that cometh*, &c. this would give a very plain and easy sense, nearly parallel to Mat. xxvi. 64, where σὺ εἶπας is perhaps used in the same sense. And thus the words might be explained as if *our Lord* had said, "From the time of my present appearance at this passover, *you shall not see me* any more, *till* that awful hour of *judgment*, in which I shall appear in such pomp and power, that the proudest of you all shall have reason to *wish* you had cordially joined in those *Hosannahs* which you lately rebuked." This interpretation, could the *version* be justified, I should vastly prefer to any other.

a *The*

be, not like *painted sepulchres*, fair and *beautiful without*, and *full of all uncleanness within*; but rather like the *vessel* laid up before the Lord, whose *outside* shone with polished *gold*, while *within* it was replenished with heavenly *manna!* (Heb. ix. 4.) SECT. CLVIII.

How many, like these *Pharisees*, condemn *persecution*, and yet themselves are chargeable with the guilt of it! May that never be our character, lest we be *judged out of our own mouths*, and lest we thereby *fill up the measure of our iniquities!* 29—32

Behold the repeated tenderness of our compassionate *Redeemer* even towards that guilty *city that killed the prophets, and stoned the messengers of God!* He *would* with the gentlest and most solicitous care *have gathered them, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings!* Thus does he still call and invite perishing sinners. Oh that the *obstinancy* of their own perverse and rebellious *wills* may not finally withstand all the overtures of his grace; lest eternal *desolations* be their portion, and they in vain *wish* for the repetition of those *calls* which they once so wantonly despised! 37—39

SECT. CLIX.

Christ applauds the liberality of the poor widow whom he saw casting her two mites into the treasury. Mark XII. 41, *to the end.* Luke XXI. 1—4.

MARK XII. 41.

AND Jesus sat over-against the treasury: [and he looked up]: and beheld how the people cast money [*and* their gifts] into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. [LUKE XXI. 1.]

MARK XII. 41.

AND Jesus, having made an end of his discourse to the scribes and Pharisees, as he was going out of the temple, *sat down* at a little distance, *over-against* that part of it which was called *the treasury*[a], because there the chests for collecting the contributions of the people stood, and in the chambers over that cloyster the sacred stores were kept; *and he looked up, and beheld,* with attentive observation, *how the people cast* their *money,* [*and*] brought *their* offerings and free *gifts, into the treasury,* at this public time; *and many rich men cast in much;* there being still this remainder of national goodness among them, though true religion was sunk to so very low an ebb. SECT. CLIX. Mark XII. 41.

42 And there came a certain poor widow, and

And there came among the rest *a certain poor widow,* whose character and circumstances he well knew; *and she cast in there two* of the smallest 42

[a] *The treasury.*] This treasury received the *voluntary contributions* of the worshippers who came up to the feasts; and the money thrown into it was employed to buy wood for the altar, salt and other necessaries, not provided for in any other way.

Mark xii. 42. smallest pieces of brass coin then in use, called *mites, which* both taken together only *make a farthing* of the Roman money.

Mark xii. 43. *And* our Lord was so pleased with this generous action of hers, that *he* took particular notice of it, and even *called his disciples to him*, to hear his remarks upon it: *and* as they stood about him, *he says to them*, Look upon yonder woman, and observe the greatness of her piety and zeal; *for assuredly I say unto you, That this poor widow*, however she may seem to men to have given but a very little inconsiderable matter, *has* appeared in the sight of God to have *cast in more than all they who have thrown* such
44 sumptuous gifts *into the treasury*: And, in proportion to her circumstances, it is much more; *for all these*, who had presented such large sums, *threw in*, comparatively, but a little part *of their* superfluity and *redundancy* of possessions *into the offerings of God; but she*, in the midst *of her poverty*, and the daily straits to which she is exposed, *has cast in all* the little stock of money *that she had* [*even*] *all* that she had by her for *her living*; not knowing where she should get the next mite for herself to furnish out the necessary supports for her humble and indigent life.

and she threw in [thither] two mites, which make a farthing. [Luke XXI. 2.]

43 And he called unto him his disciples, and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury. [Luke XXI. 3.]

44 For all [these] did cast in of their abundance [unto the offerings of God:] but she of her [penury] did cast in all that she had, even all her living. [Luke XXI. 4.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Mark xii. 42. *OUR Lord Jesus Christ* had *his eye* on those who were bringing *their gifts unto the* sacred *treasury*. Let us remember *his eye* is also *upon us*, to observe in what degree we are ready, on proper occasions, to contribute for the glory of God and the good of mankind; and in what proportion to the ability which God has
42 given us. Let not the *poorest* be discouraged from doing something for these good purposes, however little they may have it in their power to perform; since *Christ* may acknowledge the noblest *charity* in the smallest gift, as *wherever there is a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.* (2 Cor. viii. 12.)

43 Let us imitate the candour of our blessed *Redeemer*, and be ready to be pleased with *little services*. The circumstances of mankind are such that few have it in their power to do *great matters* frequently for the service of others: but *the desire of a man is his kindness*, (Prov. xix. 22.) the principles and circumstances of an action recommend it more than the appearance it may make; and a multiplicity of *little kind offices*, in persons frequently conversant with each other, are the bands of society and friendship.

friendship. We ought therefore to preserve an habitual tenderness and generosity of mind, and be mutually willing to oblige and to be obliged by them. SECT. CLIX.

To conclude; let us *not despise the poor*, since there are many of them who will in *Christ's* computation be found eminently *rich in good works*; many whose *mite* will, *in the treasury of God*, have the value of a *talent*, and will condemn the sordid parsimony with which many of the *rich* and great have *cast their presents into it*; while what the latter part with *out of their abundance* bears no proportion in the account of God to what the former freely spare *from their necessity*. Happy is it for every truly pious and benevolent mind that it is to give up its final account to him *who searches the heart*, and who is witness to those devout and charitable *purposes* which will always stretch themselves out beyond the limit of *actions*, and engage the charitable soul to wish more good than the power and revenues even of kingdoms could effect. 44

SECT. CLX.

Our Lord foretells the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and here insists on the remoter signs of its approach. Mat. XXIV. 1—14. Mark XIII. 1—13. Luke XXI. 5—19.

MAT. XXIV. 1.

AND Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple; [LUKE, and as some spake how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts,] [one of *them* saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here.*] [MARK XIII. 1. LUKE XXI. 5.]

MAT. XXIV. 1.

SECT. CLX.

AND when *Jesus* had thus confounded his adversaries, and had foretold the desolation that their aggravated sins would shortly bring both on the city and the temple, (Mat. xxiii. 38,) p. 226,) he left the place, and *going out* from thence, *departed from the temple*, where he had been discoursing to them. *And* as he was going away, *his disciples came to* [*him*], and took that occasion *to shew him the* splendid *buildings* and magnificent decorations *of the temple: and some* observing what a noble structure it was, and *speaking how it was adorned with beautiful stones*, of a prodigious size[a], *and* with costly *gifts*, which many persons, in accomplishment of their vows for deliverances received, had hung up on the walls and pillars of it, besides what was laid up in its treasures[b]; *one of* [*them*] *says unto him*, Mat. XXIV. 1

a *Beautiful stones* of a prodigious size.] Josephus says that some of them were *forty-five cubits* long, *five* high, and *six* broad: (*Bell. Jud.* lib. v. cap. 5 (al. vi. 6.) § 6.) See his large and beautiful description of the whole *temple* in that *chapter*, which is one of the most entertaining passages of such a kind I ever met with.

b Costly *gifts*, &c.] Hanging up such *αναθηματα*, or *consecrated gifts*, was common

SECT. CLX.

him, Master, behold what vastly large and curious *stones, and what* stately *edifices [are these.]*

Mat. XXIV. 2 *And Jesus replying, said unto them, [As for these things which ye behold* with so much admiration, *do you not see* the splendour and magnificence of *all these great* and pompous *buildings* which are the pride of the Jewish nation, and the wonder of all the rest of mankind? Yet notwithstanding all the present grandeur of this stately temple, *verily I say unto you,* That *the days will* quickly *come, in which* a victorious enemy shall profane its sanctity, and deface its beauty, insomuch that *there shall not be left one* single *stone upon another here, that shall not be* entirely *demolished* [c], till no remains of any part of it shall be preserved.

2 And Jesus [answering,] said unto them, [LUKE, *As for* these things which ye behold,] See ye not all these [great buildings?] Verily I say unto you, [LUKE, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.] [MARK XIII. 2. LUKE XXI. 6.]

3 *And* when he was retired from the city, *as he sat* down *upon the mount of Olives,* which was *over-against the temple,* and commanded the finest prospect of it from the east, *the disciples, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew,* who were favoured with a peculiar share of his intimacy and confidence, *came to him privately, saying Master,* we entreat thee that thou wouldst *tell us when these* awful *things shall happen? and what* [*shall be*] *the sign of thy* second *coming* when thou wilt execute thy vengeance on these thine enemies: *and of the end of the* present *age* and dispensation [d], *when all these things shall be accomplished,*

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives [over-against the temple,] the disciples [Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew] came unto him privately, saying, [LUKE, Master,] tell us when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world, [when all these things shall be fulfilled? [MARK XIII.

mon in most of the ancient *temples. Tacitus* speaks of the *immense opulence* of the *temple* at Jerusalem; (*Histor.* lib. v. § 8.) Amongst others of its treasures there was *a golden table* given by Pompey; and several *golden vines,* of exquisite workmanship, as well as immense size (for Josephus tells us, in the *chapter* cited above, § 4, that they had *clusters* [ανδρομικης] *as tall as a man;* which some have thought referred to God's representing the Jewish nation under the emblem of *a vine;* Isa. v. 1, 7. Psal. lxxx. 8. Ezek. xv. 2, 6.— And *Josephus* likewise assures (*ibid* § 6.) that the *marble* of the temple was so *white* that it appeared to one at a distance *like a mountain of snow;* and the *gilding* of several of its external parts, which he there mentions, must especially when the sun shone upon it, render it a most splendid and beautiful spectacle.

c *There shall not be left one stone upon another, here,* &c.] It seemed exceedingly improbable that this should happen in that age, considering the peace of the Jews with the Romans, and the strength of their citadel, which forced Titus himself to acknowledge that it was the singular *hand of God* which compelled them to relinquish fortifications which no human power could have conquered. (*Joseph. Bell. Jud.* lib. vi. cap. 9. al. vii. 16,) § 1.) (Compare *note* b, on Luke xix. 43. p. 162.)— Bishop *Chandler* justly observes that *no impostor* would have foretold an event so unlikely, and so disagreeable. *Defence of Christianity,* p. 472, 473.

d *The end of the* present *age.*] So συντελειαν του αιωνος may well be rendered *age.*—Archbishop Tillotson, and many other excellent writers, would retain *our translation,* and suppose here are *two distinct questions: What should be the sign of his coming* to punish the ungrateful inhabitants of Jerusalem? and *What the sign of his final appearance* to the universal judgment? And that Christ answers the *first*

XIII. 3, 4. LUKE XXI. 7]

accomplished, to make way for the brighter glories of that kingdom which thou wilt establish, when all thy sufferings are over, and every thing which opposes thy triumph subdued? SECT. CLX.

'Mat. XXIV. 3.

4 And Jesus [answering them, began to say,] Take heed, that no man deceive you. [MARK XIII. 5. LUKE XXI. 8.—]

And Jesus answering them, began to say, with an air of solemnity agreeable to the importance of the subject on which he was going to discourse; As to the event concerning which you now inquire, let me in the first place caution you, that you *see* [*to it*] in the most solicitous manner, *that no man deceive you* with false pretences to a Divine revelation and commission. 4

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; [LUKE, and the time draweth near:] and, shall deceive many: [LUKE,

For many shall come in my name, and with a title peculiar to me, *saying, I am the Messiah*[c]; *and the time* of deliverance, so long promised, and so long expected by the Jewish people, *is* now *come*[f], when 5

first question in the former, and the *second* in the latter part of the chapter: though where the transition is made, has been, among those that embrace this interpretation, matter of much debate.—Others supposed the *apostles* took it for granted that *the world* was to be *at an end* when Jerusalem was destroyed; and that Christ was not solicitous to undeceive them, as their error might make them so much the more watchful; and therefore answers in ambiguous terms, which might suit either of these events.—But it seems much more natural to conclude that they expected the wicked persecutors of Christ (in which number most of the *magistrates* and *priests* were) would by some *signal judgment* be destroyed; and that hereupon he would erect a most illustrious *kingdom*, and probably a more magnificent *temple*, which they might think described in Ezekiel: an expectation which they did not entirely quit even to the day of his *ascension*. (See Acts i. 6.) *Our Lord*, with perfect integrity and consummate wisdom, gives them an account of the *prognosticating* and *concomitant signs* of the *destruction of Jerusalem*; and then without saying one word of any *temporal kingdom* to be erected, raises their thoughts to *the final judgment* to which the *figures* used in the former description might many of them be literally applied) and sets before them an *heavenly kingdom*, and *eternal life*, as the great object of their pursuit, Mat. xxv. 34, 46. This I take to be the *key* to this whole discourse; the particular parts of which have been admirably illustrated by many learned *commentators*; but the whole scope and connection of it, so far as I can recollect, fully explained by none.

[c] *Many shall come in my name.*, &c.] See *Joseph. Bell. Jud.* lib. ii. cap. 13 (al. 12), § 4, 5.—Christian writers have always with great reason represented *Josephus's History of the Jewish War* as the best *commentary* on *this chapter*; and many have justly remarked it as a wonderful instance of the care of Providence for the *Christian church*, that *he*, an eye-witness, and in these things of so great credit, should (especially in such an extraordinary manner) be *preserved*, to transmit to us a collection of important facts, which so exactly illustrate this noble prophecy in almost every circumstance. (Compare *Joseph. Bell. Jud.* lib. iii. cap. 8, al. 14.) But as it would swell my *notes* too much to enter into a particular detail of those circumstances, I must content myself with referring to Dr. Whitby's excellent *notes* on the xxivth of Matthew, and to Archbishop *Tillotson's* large and accurate discourse on the same subject, in the *second volume* of his *Posthumous Works*, *Ser.* 183—187, p. 547, *& seq.*

[f] *The time is come.*] The word ηγγικε may signify either the *approach* or *arrival* of the time, and may with great propriety express the *first opening* of a scene to be gradually disclosed; in which sense it is applied to *Christ's kingdom*, as preached by *himself* and his *apostles*, during the time of his personal ministry.—Such pretended Messiahs did indeed arise towards the close of the Jewish state. (See 1 John iv. 1; Acts v. 36, 37; and *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xx. cap. 8, (al. 6, 7), § 6, 10.—The Rhemish Jesuits, as much as they triumph in their *infallible guide* to the interpretation of *scripture*, ridiculously explain this as a prophecy of Luther and Calvin; which I mention only as one instance, among many more, of their contemptible ignorance or wicked prevarication.

SECT. CIX. when the yoke is to be broken off from their neck, and their enemies are to be subdued under them; *and* by these plausible pretences they Mat. XXIV. 5 *shall deceive many:* but *do not ye therefore go after them;* for all their promises and hopes will be in vain, and sudden destruction will overtake them and their followers.

[LUKE, go ye not therefore after them.] [MARK XIII. 6. LUKE XXI.—8.]

6 *But when ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars,* among the Jews, *and seditions* raised by them in several places against the Romans, *see that you be not troubled* [*and*] *terrified,* as if the great event that I have now foretold would immediately happen; *for all these things must first come to pass,* and be the gradual openings of it; *but the end* of them, in the utter destruction of the Jewish state, *is not yet:* nay, some of you, my disciples, will have several important services to perform here after these alarms are begun; services which even by means of these alarms you may pursue with some peculiar advantages.

6 [LUKE, But when] ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, [LUKE, and commotions,] see that ye be not troubled [LUKE, *and* terrified]: for all [LUKE, these things] must [LUKE, first] come to pass; but the end is not yet. [MARK XIII. 7. LUKE XXI. 9.]

7 And *then he* further added, and *said to them,* Judea shall not be the only seat of war at that time; for in the neighbouring countries *nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom*[g]: *and* partly as the consequence of these ravages and slaughters, and partly by the immediate hand of Providence on sinful men who have rejected the gospel, as also to exercise the faith and charity of its professors, *there shall be* severe *famines, and* mortal *pestilences; and* there shall also happen *great* and terrible *earthquakes in various places, and troubles* and anguish of mind in the apprehension of yet greater calamities. Here at home *there shall also be dreadful sights, and great signs from heaven,* particularly a comet like a flaming sword waving over Jerusalem, and the appearance of con-

8 tending armies in the air[h]. *But all these things* [*are*]

7 [LUKE, Then said he unto them,] Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and [LUKE, great] earthquakes in divers places, [and troubles:] LUKE and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven.]—[MARK XIII. 8.—LUKE XXI. 10. 11.]

8 All these *are* the [be-

[g] *Nation shall rise up against nation,* &c.] Grotius gives us a particular account of several *wars* of the Jews among themselves, and of the Romans with the Syrians, Samaritans and other neighbouring nations, before Jerusalem was destroyed.—There were also *earthquakes* at this time in Apemea, Laodicea and Campania: (see *Tacit. Annal.* lib. xii. § 43, 58; lib. xiv. § 27; lib. xv. § 22; *Sueton. Nero,* cap. 48; *Galb.* cap. 18.)—The *famine* in the days of *Claudius* is mentioned Acts xi. 28, as well as recorded in history *Sueton. Claud.* cap. 18, and *Euseb. Hist. Eccl.* lib. ii. cap. 8); and many perished by it in Judea. See *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xx. cap. 2, § 6.

[h] *Dreadful sights, and great signs from heaven,* &c.] Of these appearances, see *Joseph. Bell. Jud.* lib. vi. cap. 5, (al. vii. 12), § 3, and *Tacit. Histor.* lib. v. § 13.—I cannot here but add an excellent observation of Mr. *West* relating to the authors by whom this prophecy, which is expressed in terms so very plain and circumstantial, is recorded; that Matthew and Mark were incontestibly dead before the event, as Luke

[beginnings] of sorrows. [MARK XIII. —8.]

[*are*] only *the beginnings of* those *sorrows* and alarms that will issue in the destruction of Jerusalem. SECT. CLX.

MARK XIII. 9. But take heed to yourselves: for [LUKE, before all these] they [LUKE, shall lay their hands on you, and persecute *you*, *and*] shall deliver you up to councils, [LUKE, *and* to the synagogues, and into prisons,] [to be] beaten [*and* afflicted, and shall kill you]: and ye [shall be hated of all nations, *and*] shall be brought before rulers and kings for my [name's] sake, for a testimony against them [MAT. XXIV. 9. LUKE XXI. 12.]

But take ye heed to yourselves, and be cautious how you behave; and though you meet with the severest persecutions, be not discouraged from persisting in the truth, and from continuing faithful in your regards to me: *for before all these things* shall happen *they shall lay their* violent *hands upon you, and persecute you* with the greatest cruelty and rage; [*and*] *shall deliver* some of *you up to the* greater *councils* [*and*] cite others of you *to* appear before the inferior courts in *the synagogues, and* shall cast some of you *into prisons, to be* severely *scourged* [*and*] otherwise *afflicted* by confinement and a variety of hardships there[i]; *and* indeed they *shall* go so far as to *kill* some of *you*, in a few years: *and* as for the rest, *ye shall be* generally *hated*, not only by the Jews here at home, but by those abroad, and *by all* the Gentile *nations* to whom you go; [*and*] *shall be brought before rulers and kings for my name's sake*, and *for a testimony against them*, that the gospel has been offered to them in the most public manner, even to the greatest of men, to whom you might otherwise have had no access: (compare Mat. x. 17, 18, sect. lxxv.) *And it shall* also *turn to you for a* public and honourable *testimony* of the innocence of your cause, however it may be misrepresented, and of the integrity and uprightness of your conduct. Mark XIII. 9. Luke XXI. 13.

LUKE XXI. 13. And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

MARK XIII. 10. And the gospel must first be published among all nations.

And indeed, notwithstanding this early and violent opposition, yet before the destruction of Jerusalem *the gospel must first be preached among all* the heathen *nations*, which are subjected to the Roman empire (see note [n]); and there also you will be followed with the like assaults and persecutions. *But when they shall bring* you before governors and kings, *and deliver you up* to the officers of justice, to be prosecuted as criminals in their most solemn courts, *settle it* at such times *in your hearts* as a constant rule *not to* Mark XIII. 10.

11 But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, [settle *it* in your hearts, not to meditate before, what ye shall answer; *and*] take 11

Luke also probably might be; and as for John, the only evangelist who survived it, it is remarkable he says nothing of it, lest any should say the prophecy was forged after the event happened.—See *West* on the *Resurrection of Christ*, p. 393.

[i] *Shall deliver you up to the councils*, &c.] All this was exactly accomplished: for Peter and John were called before the *sanhedrim* (Acts iv. 6, 7): James and Peter before Herod (Acts xii. 2, 3); and Paul before Nero the Emperor, as well as before the Roman Governors, Gallio, Felix, and Festus, (Acts xviii. 12; xxiv. xxv. xxviii.)

SECT. CLX.

to draw up any formal speech, nor to *premeditate what answer* or apology *you shall make ; [and] be not* anxiously *solicitous before-hand what you shall speak* in your defence, to vindicate yourselves and your religion from the unrighteous charges and aspersions of your enemies ; *but whatsoever shall be given* in to *you*, and be strongly suggested to your minds *in that hour, that speak* boldly and resolutely ; *for it is not you that speak, but the Holy Spirit* himself, who shall assist and dictate to you. (Compare Mat. x. 19, 20, sect. lxxv. and Luke xii. 11, 12, sect. cxi.)

Mark XIII. 11. take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak : but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye : for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. [LUKE XXI. 14.]

Luke XXI. 15. *For* it is really my cause in which you are engaged ; and therefore, though you are ignorant and unlearned men, and so may be apprehensive you shall be confounded in the presence of persons who are in rank and education so much your superiors, yet depend upon it, that *I will give you a mouth* to plead, *and wisdom* to answer whatever they alledge against you, *which all your adversaries shall not be able to contradict or withstand*, but shall be even astonished at the freedom and propriety with which you shall express yourselves, according to the various occasions which arise. (Compare Acts iv. 13, 14.)

LUKE XXI. 15. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay, nor resist.

Mat. XXIV. 10. *And many* that have owned themselves my followers *shall then be offended*, and give up all regard to the gospel, when they see the profession of it must cost them so dear ; *and* having proved apostates, they shall become persecutors too, and *shall betray one another, and hate one another*, as being in their consciences secretly galled at the greater fidelity of their companions.

MAT. XXIV. 10. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

Mark XIII. 12. *And* this wretched temper shall rise to such a height, as to break through all the bonds of nature, insomuch that *one brother shall betray another*, not only to imprisonment, but *to death : and the father*, on the one hand, shall betray [*his*] own *son ; and children*, on the other hand, *shall rise up* as witnesses *against* [*their*] aged *parents, and cause them to be put to death* without compassion or remorse. *And* these scenes, monstrous as they may seem, shall pass in your days, and before your eyes ; nay, *you* yourselves shall have a painful share in them : For you, my apostles and servants, *shall be betrayed* and persecuted *even by parents, and brethren, and kindred, and* those that pretend to be the most faithful and affectionate *friends ; and [some] of you shall they cause to be slain* by the hand of public and

MARK XIII. 12. Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son : and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

Luke XXI. 16. LUKE XXI. 16. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends : and *some* of you shall they cause to be put to death.

17 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. [MARK XIII. 13—]

and oppresive violence. *And* indeed this temper shall so generally prevail, that *ye shall be hated by* almost *all* ranks and orders, as well as nations of *men, for the sake of my name* and gospel[k], though they can find nothing else to object to your character, or accuse in your conduct; and they shall treat you as public enemies, while you are acting the most generous and benevolent part. (Compare Mat. x. 22. sect. lxxv.) *But* in the midst of all your sufferings be courageous and cheerful, as knowing you are the care of a peculiar and most gracious Providence; so that, on the whole, you shall be safe, and *not an hair of your head shall* utterly *perish*[l], or fall to the ground unregarded. *In your patience* therefore *possess ye your souls*[m], and be calm and serene, the masters of yourselves, and above the agitation of any irrational or disquieting passion.

SECT. CLX.

Luke XXI. 17

18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

18

19 In your patience possess ye your souls.

19

MAT. XXIV. 11. And

For though your discouragements are great, *and*

Mat. XXIV. 11

[k] *Ye shall be hated by all men for the sake of my name.*] That not only the *apostles*, but all the *primitive Christians*, were in general more *hated* and persecuted than any other religious *sect* of men, is most notorious to all who are at all acquainted with *ecclesiastical history*. A fact which might seem unaccountable, when we consider how inoffensive and benevolent their temper and conduct was, and how friendly an aspect their tenets had on the security of any government under which they lived. We are not to imagine (as Mons. St. *Real* weakly insinuates in his ill-digested, though elegant, *History of the Life of Jesus*, p. 264) that they had any peculiar aversion to *the name of Christ*. The learned Dr. *Warburton* has shewn, beyond all contradiction in his masterly manner, that the true reason of this opposition was, that while the different *pagan religions*, like the confederated *demons* honoured by them, sociably agreed with each other, the *gospel* taught Christians, not only like the Jews, to bear their testimony to the falsehood of them all, but also with the most fervent zeal to urge the renunciation of them, as a point of absolute necessity; requiring all men, on the most tremendous penalties, to *believe in Christ*, and in all things to submit themselves to his authority: see Dr. *Warburton's Divine Legation of Moses*, Vol. I. book ii. § 6, p. 278—295. A demand which bore so hard especially on the pride and licentiousness of their *princes*, and the secular interest of their *priests*, that it is no wonder they raised so violent a storm against it; which, considering the character and prejudices of the populace, it must be very easy to do.

[l] *Not an hair of your head shall perish.*] *Our Lord* had fortold but just before (ver. 16), that several of them should be *put to death*; he must therefore here intend to assure them, that when they came on the whole to balance their accounts, they should find they had not been losers in any the least instance; but that whatever damage they had sustained, it should be amply made up, and they at length placed in a state of entire security. This is plainly the import of this *proverbial* expression. See 1 Sam. xiv. 45. 2 Sam. xiv. 11. 1 Kings i. 52. and Acts xxvii. 34.

[m] *In your patience possess ye your souls.*] Though the word κτάσθαι does often signify *to acquire* or *procure* (see Mat. x. 9. Acts i. 18. viii. 20. xxii. 28), yet I cannot suppose, with Brennius, that *our Lord* intends here chiefly to intimate that fortitude and composure of spirit might have a tendency to secure their lives, as it would enable them calmly to deliberate on the several circumstances which might arise. I cannot but think that the sense which the accurate and pious Dr. *Wright* gives of this passage, in that excellent piece of *Christian Philosophy*, his discourse on *Self Possession* (p. 4, 5), is much more natural, as well as more noble; as if *our Lord* had said, "By keeping the government of your own spirits in these awful scenes, which will bear down so many others, you will secure the most valuable *self-enjoyment*, as well as be able most prudently to guard against the dangers which will surround you."

SECT. CIX.

and particularly on this account, that (as I hinted before, ver. 5) *many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many;* which some will urge as a farther excuse for suspecting and abusing you: *And,* though *because iniquity shall abound* under such a variety of forms, *the love of many* professing Christians, who should be your protectors and comforters, *will grow cool;* so that they shall be afraid or ashamed to entertain you, and shall be ready to throw up the cause which you so zealously defend: Yet sink not under the burden; *but* remember this, and let it animate you amidst all your difficulties, That *he who* resolutely *endures* all these extremities, and perseveres *to the end, shall* finally *be saved,* and have his life given him as a prey. (Compare Mat. x. 22.)

And know, for your farther encouragement, that all their rage shall not be able to destroy the interest in which you are embarked, and to which you sacrifice so much; for I assure you, that *this* glorious *gospel of the kingdom* of heaven *shall* first *be preached in all the world, for a witness to all* its most distant *nations*[n]; *and then shall the end* of the Jewish state *come,* and God, having thus gathered for himself a people from among the Gentiles, shall destroy even this temple itself, in which they have trusted so much, and which they have foolishly looked upon as an inviolable pledge of his favour.

Mat. XXIV. 12 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. [MARK XIII.—13.]

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

IMPROVEMENT.

THE whole of this prophecy most evidently shews us how vain and dangerous it is to trust in external privileges, and to cry out, as these foolish and wretched *Jews* did, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these* buildings; when of this stately and magnificent structure, within less than half

Mat. xxiv. 2

a

[n] *This gospel—shall be preached in all the world,* &c.] The accomplishment of this extraordinary prophecy is admirably illustrated by Dr. *Arthur Young on Idolatry,* Vol. II. p. 216—234. It appears, from the most credible records, that the *gospel* was preached in Idumea, Syria and Mesopotamia, by Jude; in Egypt, Marmorica, Mauritania, and other parts of Africa, by Mark, Simon, and Jude; in Ethiopia by Candace's eunuch, and Matthias; in Pontus, Galatia, and the neighbouring parts of Asia, by Peter; in the territories of the seven Asiatic churches, by John; in Parthia, by Matthew; in Scythia, by Philip and Andrew; in the northern and western parts of Asia, by Bartholomew; in Persia, by Simon and Jude; in Media, Carmania, and several eastern parts, by Thomas; through the vast tract from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum, by Paul, as also in Italy, and probably in Spain, Gaul, and Britain: in most of which places Christian churches were planted in less than *thirty* years after the death of Christ, which was before *the destruction of Jerusalem.*

a century after it was finished, *not one stone was left on another* undemolished. SECT. CLX.

So particular a prediction, when compared with the event, must surely confirm our faith in *Christ*, as the great Prophet which was to come into the world. And we shall see reason to admire the wisdom and goodness of Divine Providence in giving us, almost by a miraculous preservation of the author, such a *commentary* on this prophecy as is delivered down to us in the *works of Josephus*, the *Jewish* historian, which throw a much stronger light upon it than if they had been written by a *Christian* on purpose to illustrate it,

Let us bless God that our own eyes have not seen such *desolations* and *ruins*, such *commotions* in the natural and moral world, such *dissentions*, in civil life, such *persecutions* and *hatreds* amongst the nearest *relatives*, under the pretence of propagating *religion*; which, however propagated, is nothing without that *love* which is so often made the first victim to it. Luke xxi. 10, 11 Mat. xiii. 12, 13

Yet too plainly do we see, in one form or another, *iniquity abounding and the love of many waxing cold.* Let us endeavour to revive on our own hearts a deep and lasting impression of Divine things; and remember, whenever we are tempted to let go our integrity, that it is *he* alone *who endures to the end* that *shall be saved.* Mat. xxiv. 12, 13

Whatever our trials are, let us cheerfully confide in the protection of *Divine Providence*; nor let us despair of those continued influences of the blessed *Spirit* which may animate us to the most difficult services, and support us under the most painful sufferings. Let us therefore *in patience possess our* own *souls*, and maintain that composure and steadiness of spirit, as those that know how much more valuable it is than any enjoyment which can be taken away, or any temporal interest which can be brought into question. Luke xxi. 14, 18, 19

SECT. CLXI.

Our Lord proceeds to describe the nearer prognostications of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the extreme severity of those calamities which should then fall on the Jewish nation. Mat. XXIV. 15—28. Mark XIII. 14—23. Luke XXI. 20—24.

LUKE XXI. 20.

AND when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, [*and* the abomination of

LUKE XXI. 20.

OUR Lord having proceeded thus far in his discourse, added some more immediate signs, by which the near approach of this terrible destruction might be determined; *and* said, *When you shall see Jerusalem encompassed* on every SECT. CLXI. Luke XXI. 20

SECT. clxi.

side *with* the Roman *armies*, [*and*] *the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet* (Dan. ix. 27), *standing where it ought not*, and displayed *in an holy place;* that is, when the standards of their desolating legions, on which they bear the detestable images of their idols, are planted on holy ground[a]; *then know, that the desolation thereof is* just *approaching*. And, by the way, now I mention that remarkable prophecy, *let every one that reads* it pause seriously upon it, that he may *understand* its meaning; for it contains one of the most eminent predictions which can any where be found, of the time, purposes and consequences of my appearing; and the whole context is of great import-

Luke XXI. 20.

of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet,] [MARK, standing where it ought not] [in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)] then know that the desolation thereof is nigh [MAT. XXIV. 15. MARK XIII. 14.—]

21 ance[b]. Now I say, when you see this signal, *then let them that are in Judea flee*, as fast as they can from the fortified cities and populous towns, *to the mountains* and the wilderness, where they will be secure; *and* especially *let them that are in the midst of it*, where Jerusalem stands, *depart* immediately *out* of it, before their retreat is cut off by the union of the enemies' forces near that centre; *and let not them that are in the* adjacent *countries*, by any means attempt to *enter into it*, as a place of safety; for all its strength, and all its sanctity, will not secure its inhabitants. Let every one therefore retreat as fast as possible, *and let not him that is* taking the air *on the* battlements at the *top of the house, go down into the house, nor enter into it, to take away any thing*, though ever so precious, *out*

21 Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it, depart out; and let not them that are in the countries, enter thereinto. [MAT. XXIV. 16. MARK XIII.—14.]

Mark XIII. 15

MARK XIII. 15. And let him that is on the house-top, not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to

[a] Planted on holy ground.] Not only the *temple*, and the *mountain* on which it stood, but the whole *city of Jerusalem*, and several furlongs of land round about it, were accounted *holy*. (See *note* g, on Mat. iv. Vol. VI. p. 113.)—It is remarkable, that by the special providence of God, after the Romans under Cestius Gallus made their first advance towards Jerusalem, they suddenly withdrew again, in a most unexpected, and indeed impolitic, manner; at which *Josephus* testifies his surprise, since the city might then have been easily taken. By this means they gave as it were a signal to the Christians to retire; which, in regard to this admonition, they did, some to Pella, and others to mount Libanus, and thereby preserved their lives. See *Joseph. Bell. Jud.* lib. ii. cap. 19 (al. 24), § 7, and *Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. 5.—Of the *idolatrous standards* in the Roman armies, see Grotius's excellent *note* on Mat. xxiv. 15.

[b] The whole context is of great importance.] If any wonder that so important a prophecy is not more frequently insisted upon in the *New Testament*, I think we may justly answer, that it was not proper for the *apostles* to urge it; as the exact commencement and termination of the *seventy weeks* was a nice controversy out of their way, and not capable of being fully cleared up to the populace, with whom they were chiefly concerned; and as several of the events referred to in it had not their complete accomplishment till some years after most of their writings were published. But that the period is long since elapsed is certain, however it might be reckoned; as Dr. *Bullock* has excellently shewn. See his *Vindication*, book ii. chap. 4, § 6. p. 216—218, and Dr. *Sykes of Christianity*, chap. xvi. p. 297—301.

to take any thing out of his house. [MAT. XXIV. 17.]

16 And let him that is in the field, not turn back again for to take up his garment. [MAT. XXIV. 18.]

out of his house; but let him go down by the outer-stairs, as the shortest way, lest he should linger to his own destruction. *And let not him that is* at work *in the field*, and hath laid aside his upper-garment as an incumbrance, *go back*, so much as a few steps, *to take his clothes* [c], lest the enemy should surprise him before he can recover them. (Compare Luke xvii. 31, p. 63.)

SECT. CLXI.

Mark XIII. 16

LUKE XXI. 22. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

In a word, let every one flee for his life, and reckon himself sufficiently happy if he can escape with it, though in the most naked and destitute circumstances: *for these are days of* most terrible *vengeance*, to which most of the threatenings of the prophets, even from the days of Moses, do ultimately refer; and they shall be so full of distress and misery, *that all* the most dreadful *things which are written* in them *may* then be said to *be* completely *fulfilled* [d].

Luke XXI. 22

46

MARK XIII. 17. But wo to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days. [MAT. XXIV. 19. LUKE XXI. 23.—]

But more especially there will be *wo* and terror *to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days*; as their incumbrances will be peculiarly great, and they that are with them will be driven in a wild consternation to consult their own safety, to the neglect of those whom common humanity might teach them to guard and assist.

Mark XIII. 17

18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, [neither on the sabbath-day.] [MAT. XXIV. 20.]

And therefore *pray that* no additional circumstances of difficulty may attend you; as, for instance, that this *your* precipitate *flight may not be in winter*, when the roads are bad, and the days short and dark; *nor* fall out *on a sabbath-day*; for a short journey may not be sufficient, and the regard which most of the Christians in these parts will have for that day, may make them scrupulous of violating a rest they think so sacred, by a longer march, even in a case of so much extremity. 18

And

[c] *Go back to take his clothes.*] These are as strong expressions as one can imagine to urge the speediest retreat. It is indeed observable, that this whole discourse abounds with very lively figures of oratory and is heightened with the noblest beauties of description. Were it necessary to produce authorities to prove that husbandmen laid aside their upper-garment when at work, they might be found in *Elsner (Observ.* Vol. I. page 109, 110,) but that learned critic has impaired the beauty of the text by interpreting it as a caution *not to go home* to fetch them. *Not to turn back*, implies fleeing directly without *going back* (as we speak in the country) *so much as a land's length* to take them up; and so it rises on the former verse.

[d] *May* then be said to *be* completely *fulfilled.*] Among many admirable things to be found in that great original, Dr. *Jackson's Credibility of the Scriptures*, I cannot but reckon that part of it, in which he shews how exactly the prophecies of Moses were accomplished in the slaughter and dispersion of the Jews in, and quickly after, this fatal war with the Romans. See the passages quoted below, in *note* m, p. 243.

[e] *Suck*

SECT. clxi.

Mark XIII. 19.

Luke XXI. 24.

And a case of extremity it will indeed be: *for in those days there shall be* a scene of *great tribulation* [*and*] *distress in the land* of Judea, *and* of dreadful *wrath* from heaven *upon* all *this people, such as the like has not been* known before, either here or elsewhere, even *from the beginning of the creation which God has made unto this time; nor ever shall* the like *be* heard of any more [e]; as no people ever have been, or ever shall be, guilty of so aggravated a crime, and so inexcusable a series of impenitence and infidelity. *And* therefore *they shall fall by the edge of the sword* in multitudes, both within and without the city; *and* the consequence of all shall be, that the miserable remnant which survives the general carnage *shall be carried* away *captive into all* the most distant *nations* of the world [f], and continue for many ages under great infamy, calamity, and oppression. *And* in the mean time, *Jerusalem* itself *shall be trampled down* and kept in possession *by the Gentiles* [g], *till the times* appointed for these triumphs and insults *of the Gentiles* shall *be fulfilled*, and the day come when God shall remember his ancient people in mercy [h].

19 For in those days [LUKE, there shall be great] tribulation *and*] [LUKE, distress in the land, and wrath upon this people,] such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created, unto this time, [no, nor ever shall be. [MAT. XXIV. 21. LUKE XXI.—23.]

LUKE XXI. 24. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

And

e *Such as the like has not been,——nor ever shall be.*] This Josephus expressly asserts to have been the fact; and whoever reads his account, or even that judicious abstract from him which *Eusebius* has given us, (*Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. 5, 6,) will see a sad illustration of all this; and, criminal and detestable as the Jewish nation, now was, will hardly be able to forbear weeping over those complicated miseries brought upon them by *plagues* and *famine*, and *fires*, occasioned by the siege, and by the carnage made, not only by the Romans, but by the yet greater cruelties of the *seditious* and *zealots* within the city, who really acted the part of so many incarnate fiends rather than of men.

f *They shall fall by the edge of the sword and shall be carried captive*, &c.] It appears from *Josephus* that *eleven hundred thousand Jews* were destroyed in this war, and near an *hundred thousand* taken prisoners, and (according to Deut. xxviii. 68.) sold for slaves at the vilest prices. See *Joseph. Bel. Jud.* lib. vi. cap. 9. (al. vii. 17.) § 3.

g *Jerusalem shall be trampled down by the Gentiles.*] Their land was sold, and no Jew was allowed to inhabit there (a rigour never used, that I know of, towards any other people conquered by the Romans; nay, they might not come within sight of Jerusalem, or rather of Elia, the name given to the *new city*, which was built without the circuit of the former when the foundations of the *old* were ploughed up. A *heathen temple* was afterwards built where that of God had stood; and a *Turkish mosque* pollutes it to this day; so remarkably was the hand of God upon them. And it is well known, by the testimony of a *heathen writer*, (who ridiculously ascribes it to the fatal resistance in the element,) that Julian's impious attempt to rebuild their temple, and settle them in Jerusalem again, in professed contempt of this prophecy, was several times miraculously defeated by the eruption of balls of fire, which consumed the workmen. See *Ammian. Marcel.* lib. xxiii. cap. 1, p. 286.

h *Till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*] It is much easier to vindicate the authority of the words καιροι εθνων from the objection of Dr. *Mill* (*Proleg.* p. 133.) chiefly founded on their being omitted in the *Cambridge Manuscript*, than to determine the signification of them. I cannot suppose, with Mess. Le Clerc and L'Enfant, that by *the accomplishment of the times of the Gentiles*, we are to understand the time when *Constantine* put an end to the *Gentile idolatory* in Jerusalem, and

MARK XIII. 20. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, [those days shall be shortened.] [MAT. XXIV. 22.]

And during the wars which are to bring on this said catastrophe, *except the Lord had shortened those days no flesh could be saved;* the whole nation would be utterly exterminated from the earth, and the name of Israel no longer be had in remembrance[i]: *but for the elect's sake, whom he has* graciously *chosen* to be at length partakers of the blessings of his gospel, God will so order it in his providence, that *those days shall be shortened;* for he hath still purposes of love toward the seed of Abraham, which shall at length take place, (Rom. xi. 26.) and, in the mean time, he will make their continuing a distinct people a means of confirming the faith of Christians in succeeding ages[k].

SECT. CLXI. Mark XIII. 20.

21 And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or lo, *he is* there; believe *him* not. [MAT. XXIV. 23.]

As these then are the counsels of the Divine Wisdom concerning this people, do not expect, that when calamities begin to threaten them, any miraculous deliverer should be raised up for them; *and if any one shall then say unto you, Behold the Messiah [is] here or behold [he is] there, do not believe [it]* or shew the least regard to any such report. (Compare Luke xvii. 23, p. 62.) 21

and established the christian worship there. *Euseb. Vit. Const.* lib. iii. cap. 26.) It seems reasonable to suppose that here, as in most other places, the Gentiles are opposed to the Jews; and consequently, that all the period between the destruction of Jerusalem and the restoration of the Jews to their own land, so expressly foretold in *scripture*, is here intended. (See Isa. xxvii. 12, 13. Ezek. xi. 17. xx. 40, 42. xxxiv. 13. xxxvi. 24. 28. xxxvii. 21—28. xxxix. 28, 29. Hos. iii. 5. Amos ix. 14, 15. and Zech. xiv. 10, 11.) With this indeed is connected *the bringing in*, what St. Paul calls, *the fulness of the Gentiles:* Rom. xi. 25, 26. But unless it could be proved (which I do not recollect) that the inhabitants of Palestine shall then peaceably surrender it to the returning Jews, it seems most natural to suppose *the time of the Gentiles* here signifies the time when they shall be *visited* and *punished;* which is the sense in which *this very phrase*, and others nearly parallel to it, frequently occur in the *Old Testament;* as Brennius justly observes. (Compare Ezek. xxx. 3. as also Jer. xxvii. 7. l. 27. Ezek. xxi. 25, 29. xxii. 3, 4.) And, if this be the sense of it, it seems an intimation that the Turks, or some other antichristian power, may continue possessed of *the holy land* till the restoration of the Jews; for one can hardly suppose their way into it should then be opened by the conquest of a Christian nation.

[i] *Except the Lord had shortened these days, no flesh could be saved,* &c.] Such were the quarrels that prevailed among the Jews, that numbers of them were destroyed by one another: and the whole country was become a scene of such desolation and bloodshed, that not only those who were shut up in Jerusalem, but the whole Jewish nation, would have suffered much more by the longer continuance of the siege, considering how much the same spirit prevailed among them in other places.—Mr. *Reading* in his *Life of Christ*, p. 309. understands *the days being shortened for the elect's sake*, of the preservation of the Christians at Pella, whose safety he supposes to have depended on the shortening of the siege, and whom he takes to be *the elect* intended here. (See Dr. *Whitby* on Mark xiii. 20.—Of the special providence by which the siege was shortened, see *Grotius* on Mat. xxiv. 22.

[k] Their continuing a distinct people, a means of confirming the faith of Christians, &c.] This I have shewn at large in my *ten Sermons*, Sermon tenth; and the reader may see the remark farther illustrated by Mr. *Addison*, *Spectat.* Vol. VII. No. 495, and in Bishop *Burnet's Four Discourses*, p. 8—10.

SECT. clxi.

For as this unhappy people, who are now so obstinately rejecting me, will to the last support themselves with vain hopes of that kind, and
Mark XIII. 22. be ready eagerly to hearken to every bold impostor *false Messiahs and false prophets shall arise, and shall* pretend to *shew great signs and prodigies*[1], managed with *so* much art, *as* might, *if* [*it were*] *possible*, be sufficient *to deceive* even *the very elect*, and to pervert my sincere followers and disciples themselves; though indeed their hearts shall be so established by Divine grace
23 as finally to be secured from the danger. *But be* ye cautiously *upon your guard* against so dangerous an imposition; for *behold I have* expressly *foretold you all* these *things*; that on comparing the event with the prediction, your faith may be established by those very circumstances which in another view might have a tendency to shake
Mat. XXIV. 26 it. *Therefore if they shall say unto you, Behold,* we have found the expected Messiah, and *he is* now gathering his forces about him *in the wilderness* for the deliverance of his people, *do not go forth* to join yourselves to his followers; [*or*] if they shall say, *Behold* [*he is*] *in the secret apartments* of some particular friend, where he is waiting to give satisfaction to those that desire it, *do not believe* [*it*] nor give yourselves the trouble
27 so much as to inquire into the affair. *For* you know there is, and can be, no other Messiah but me; and when I appear it will be in a sudden, amazing, and irresistible manner; and *as the lightning breaks forth from the east, and shines* in a moment *even to the west* part of the horizon,

22 For false Christs, and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew [great] signs and wonders, [insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.] [MAT. XXIV. 24.]

23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. [MAT. XXIV. 25.]

MAT. XXIV. 26. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desart, go not forth: Behold, *he is* in the secret chambers, believe *it* not.

27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

so

1 *False prophets shall arise, and shew great signs and prodigies.*] This is not a mere repetition of what was said before, Mat. xxiv. 5. (p. 252,) but relates to those *impostors* who appeared during the time of the siege; of which see *Joseph. Bell. Jud.* lib. vi. cap. 5. (al. vii. 11,) § 2, and *Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* lib. iv. cap. 6. See also *Grotius* on Mat. xxiv. 24.— As for the objection which is urged from this text against admitting *miracles* as *a proof of doctrines*, I would hear transiently observe two things: (1) That it cannot certainly be proved that the works here referred to were *true miracles*; they might be like *the lying powers, signs, and wonders*, mentioned 2 Thess. ii. 9. Or, (2.) That if we should for argument's sake grant them to be real *miracles*, yet they are supposed to be *wrought at a time* when there were in the Christian church *teachers* subsisting with *superior miraculous powers*. But it can never be inferred from such a supposition in that case, that God will suffer *miracles* to be wrought *in proof of falsehood*, when there are none of his servants to perform *greater miracles* on the side of *truth*. And when such *superior miracles* on the side of truth do exist, the opposite *miracles* at most can only prove that some invisible beings of great power, who are the abettors of *falsehood*, are strongly engaged to support the contrary doctrine; the consideration of which must excite all wise and good men to receive *a truth so opposed* with greater readiness, and to endeavour to promote it with greater zeal; as they may be sure the excellence and importance of it is proportionable to the solicitude of these malignant spirits to prevent its progress.

m In-

so sudden and conspicuous *also shall the coming of the Son of man be*, both in his appearance to the destruction of Jerusalem, and to the final judgment. (Compare Luke xvii. 24, p. 62.) And very extensive also will the desolation be; *for*, as I formerly told you, Luke xvii. 37, p. 64), *wheresoever the* dead *carcase is, there will the eagles* naturally *be gathered together;* and wherever the obstinate enemies of my kingdom are, they shall be sought out and destroyed: and here in particular I will send the Roman eagles against them, who shall consume and devour them as a helpless prey, not only at Jerusalem, but over the face of the whole country; and afterwards in some more distant regions, where the greatest numbers of Jews are settled [m].

SECT. clxi.

Mat. XXIV.

28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. 28

IMPROVEMENT.

If *our Lord* urges his *disciples*, with such speedy and solicitous haste, to *flee* from the sword of God's *temporal judgments*, how much greater diligence should we give to *flee from the wrath to come!* What are any of the *little interests of life*, that out of regard to them we should be willing to continue one moment longer exposed to a danger which may sink us into everlasting perdition and despair!

Luke xxi. 21.

Mark xiii. 15, 16

We have here a lively description of that aggravated *ruin* which was brought upon the *Jews* for neglecting *Christ;* even *great tribulation, such as* had never, *from the* very *beginning of the world*, fallen upon any other nation, *nor shall ever be* equalled. Thus was *his blood upon them, and their children.* (Mat. xxvii. 25.) May we never know what it is to have *this blood* crying against us for *trampling it under foot as an unholy thing!* (Heb. x. 29.) For surely to the *Jews*, who *thus rejected the counsel of God against themselves, all these things* which they suffered were but *the beginning of sorrows;* and the *famine* and *sedition*, *pestilence* and *slaughter*, by which so many thousands perished, served only to consign

Mat. xxiv. 21.

7, 8

[m] In some more distant regions, &c.] There may perhaps be an oblique intimation in this passage of the *slaughter* afterwards made on the Jews elsewhere, and particularly under *Adrian* and *Trajan*; when what had been foretold by Moses (Deut. xxviii. 49, *& seq.*) was remarkably fulfilled, and as *an eagle* flies upon its prey, their enemies pursued them to destruction; and the calamities they underwent were such, that (as *Dio Cassius* informs us, *Hist.* lib. 69) 50,000 were slain, 500 of their fortresses were demolished, and 900 of their chief towns in Egypt, Crete, &c. were plundered and burnt to the ground: not to mention the terrible things they afterwards suffered in France, Italy, Spain, and other parts of Europe, in the decline of the *Roman empire:* of all which see Dr. *Jackson's Eternal Truth of the Scriptures*, book i. part 2, sect. 3, chap. 6, 10—13.

SECT. clxi. consign them over to infinitely more terrible *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish,* which will at last fall *on every soul of man that doth evil,* whether *Jew* or *Gentile.* (Rom. ii. 8, 9.)

Mark xiii. 21, 22 These unhappy creatures eagerly listened to the very name of a *Messiah,* by whomsoever it was assumed; while they rejected him whom God had sent them, and who had so long, and with so much importunity, been renewing to them the offers of life and salvation. May none of us ever know the sad impatience with which condemned sinners will wish, and wish in vain, for those overtures and messages of grace which they now despise! In that Mat. xxiv. 28. sense, *wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together:* wherever there is the like unbelief and impenitence, Mark xiii. 23. there will be in its degree the like ruin. *Christ* has graciously *told us these things before:* may we humbly attend to the warning, that none of this terror and destruction may ever come upon us!

SECT. CLXII.

Christ describes the total destruction of the Jewish state by strong figures, many of them literally suiting the day of judgment: to the mention of which he proceeds, declaring the particular time of it unknown. Mat. XXIV. 29—36. Mark XIII. 24—32. Luke XXI. 25—33.

LUKE XXI. 25.

SECT. clxii. OUR Lord proceeded in the awful representation of the judgments that were coming on Jerusalem, *and* said, Before this desola- Luke XXI. 25. tion shall be completely come, *there shall be* (as I told you, ver. 11) some extraordinary *signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;* eclipses, comets, and surprising meteors; *and on the earth* there shall be *anguish and distress of nations; the sea and the* proud *waves thereof roaring,* and breaking in upon the land with an irresistible 26 inundation; *While men shall be* almost *expiring with fear*[a], *and* overwhelmed with the sad *expectation of those* calamitous *things which are coming upon the land:* for this shall not be like former invasions or captivities, which only produced some transient disorders in the state, or at most

LUKE XXI. 25.

AND there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea, and the waves roaring;

26—Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.—

[a] *Expiring with fear.*] This is the literal rendering of αποψυχοντων απο φοβου. —The *signs* here spoken of seem to be some of the latest of those mentioned in the *writers* referred to above in *notes* g and h on ver. 10, 11, p. 232.

[b] *Imme-*

most, an interruption in the government for a few years; but it shall be attended with such a total subversion of it, and with such vast, extensive, and lasting ruin, that it shall be a most lively emblem of the desolation of the whole world at the last day. SECT. CIXI. Luke XXI. 26.

MAT. XXIV. 29. Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light; and the stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. [MARK XIII. 24, 25. LUKE XXI.—26.]

For *immediately after the affliction of those days*, which I have now been describing[b], *the sun shall* as it were *be darkened, and the moon shall not* seem to *give her* usual *light; and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens*, all the mighty machines and strong movements above, *shall be shaken* and broken in pieces[c]; that is, according to the sublimity of that prophetic language to which you have been accustomed, the whole civil and ecclesiastical constitution of the nation shall not only be shocked, but totally dissolved. Mat. XXIV. 29

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. [MARK XIII. 26. LUKE XXI. 27.]

And then shall there evidently *appear* such a remarkable hand of providence in avenging my quarrel upon this sinful people, that it shall be like *the sign of the Son of man in heaven* at the last day; *and all the tribes of the land shall then mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming* as it were *in the clouds of heaven*[d], *with power and great glory*; for that celestial army which shall appear in the air marshalled round the city, shall be a sure token to them 30

b *Immediately after the affliction of those days.*] Archbishop Tillotson, and Brennius, with many other learned interpreters, imagine that *our Lord* here makes the *transition* from the *destruction of Jerusalem*, which had been the subject of his discourse thus far, to the *general judgment*: but I think, as it would, on the one hand, be very harsh to suppose all the sufferings of the Jewish nation, in all ages, to be called *the tribulation of those days*; so it would, on the other hand, be equally so to say that the *general judgment*, which probably will not commence till at least *a thousand years* after their restoration, will happen *immediately after* their sufferings; nor can I find any one instance in which ευθεως is used in such a strange latitude.—What is said below (in Mat. xxiv. 34; Mark xiii. 30; and Luke xxi. 32; p. 247) seems also an unanswerable objection against such an interpretation.—I am obliged therefore to explain *this section* as in the *paraphrase*; though I acknowledge many of the *figures* used may with more literal propriety be applied to the *last day*, to which there may be a remote, though not an immediate reference.

c *The sun shall be darkened,* &c.] It was customary with the *prophets*, as it still is with the *eastern writers*, to describe the utter ruin of states and kingdoms, not only in general by an *universal darkness*, but also by such strong *figures* as those here used, which all have their foundation in that way of speaking. Compare Isa. xiii. 10; xxxiv. 4, 10; lx. 20; Jer. xv. 9; Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8; Joel ii. 30, 31; iii. 15; and Amos viii. 9.

d *Coming in the clouds of heaven.*] Sudden and irresistible destruction, in which much of the hand of God evidently appears, is (as Dr. Whitby justly observes) often expressed by God's *coming in the clouds*: (compare Psal. xviii. 9; l. 3, 4; xcvii. 2, 3; civ. 3; Isa. xix. 1; xxvi. 21; lxvi. 15.) But I think the *celestial appearances* described by Josephus (as above, *note* h, on Luke xxi. 11, p. 252) lead us into the exactest interpretation of this text, and greatly illustrate the propriety of these expressions here.

SECT. CLXII.

them that the angels of God, and the great Lord of those heavenly hosts, are set as it were in array against them. *And*, to pursue the allusion, as at the great day the angels shall in a literal sense assemble all his saints together, so also *he shall then send* forth *his messengers*[e] *with the great sound* of his gospel, as *of a* loud *trumpet, and they shall assemble his elect from the four winds*, even *from one end of the heavens to the other*, or *from the utmost part of the earth one way to* those climates which lie under *the uttermost part of heaven* the other way; and multitudes of all nations shall obey the summons, though the Jews have ungratefully and foolishly despised it; and the Son of man shall be honoured and trusted by millions now unborn, when this wicked and perverse nation is perished in their rebellion and infidelity. *And when these things begin to come to pass*, be not you terrified and dismayed, but rather cheerfully *look upwards*[f], *and lift up your heads* with joy and assurance; *for* whatever happens, you will be secure; and as soon as you see the first appearance of these signs, you may comfortably conclude that *your* complete *redemption* and deliverance *draws nigh*[g]; for many of you will be safely brought home to the haven of eternal peace before these storms are ended, and the rest of you will not long survive them.

Mat. XXIV. 31

Luke XXI. 28.

29 *And*, further to illustrate what he had been saying, *he spake to them a* very easy and familiar *parable*, saying, *Behold now*, [*and*] *learn a parable*

31 And [then] he shall send his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other, [from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven. [MARK XIII. 27.]

LUKE XXI. 28. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

29 And he spake to them a parable, [Now] behold [*and* learn a parable of] the fig-

e *Send* forth *his messengers.*] Most *translations*, as well as our own, greatly obscure this text, by rendering the word ἀγγέλους *angels*; for though it generally signify those *celestial spirits* who are on great occasions the *messengers* of God to our world, it is well known that the word refers not to their nature but to their office; and is often applied to men, and rendered *messengers*. See Mark i. 2; Luke vii. 24, 47; ix. 52; 2 Cor. viii. 23; Phil. ii. 25; and Jam. ii. 25. In some of which places it signifies, as here, *preachers of the gospel*, who were sent forth to carry on God's great design of uniting all his chosen people in one society under Christ, as their common head. Eph. i. 10.

f *Look upwards*: ἀνακύψατε.] This is an expression which admirably suits the load of labour and sufferings under which the apostles would be depressed in this afflicted state. See *Raphel. Annot. ex Herod.* p. 270.

g *Your redemption draws nigh.*] As the *resurrection* is the time when we shall in fact be fully *redeemed*, or delivered from all the sad consequences of sin, and therefore is called *the redemption of our bodies*, (Rom. viii. 23; compare Eph. iv. 30, and Hos. xiii. 14): so in a less proper sense the deliverance from all the toils and sorrows, temptations and infirmities, of this sinful and calamitous life, may, on the like principles, be called *redemption*. And if we may judge of the length of the *apostles' lives* by the extent of their labours, though we know not the time when many of them died, there is reason to conjecture it was not till about this period; which, by the way, would be an argument they were now most of them *young men*.

h *This*

fig-tree, and all the trees: [MAT. XXIV. 32.—MARK XIII. 28.—]

30 When [his branch is yet tender, and] they now shoot forth [leaves,] ye see and know of your own-selves, that summer is now nigh at hand: [MAT. XXIV.—32. MARK XIII.—28.]

31 So likewise ye, when ye [shall] see [all] these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand, [*even* at the doors.] [MAT. XXIV. 33. MARK XIII. 29.

32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all [these things] be fulfilled. [MAT. XXIV. 34. MARK XIII. 30.]

33 Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away. [MAT. XXIV. 35. MARK XIII. 31.]

MARK XIII. 32. But of that day, and *that* hour,

ble from the example of *the fig-tree, and all the* other *trees* that drop their leaves in the winter: *When* buds appear upon the fig-tree, and *its branch is now become tender, and* the sap rising in the other trees, *they shoot forth* their young *leaves*, and begin to open and spread, *you see and know of your ownselves*, by the observation you have often made, *that summer is now near at hand*, as these are certain prognostications of it: *So likewise you, when you shall see all these things come to pass*, may assuredly *know that* the destruction of the Jewish state, and the advancement of *the kingdom of God* in all its glory, *is just at hand*, [*even*] *at the doors*; or that the time is coming when the desolation I have been speaking of shall come upon Jerusalem, and the gospel shall be propagated all abroad, and take such root in the world, that you may assure yourselves it shall never be destroyed.

SECT. clxii. Luke XXI. 30. 31

And *verily I say unto you*, and urge you to observe it, as absolutely necessary in order to understand what I have been saying, *That this generation* of men now living *shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled*[h]; for what I have foretold concerning the destruction of the Jewish state is so near at hand, that some of you shall live to see it all accomplished with a dreadful exactness: And the rest may die in the assurance of it: for another and yet more awful day shall come when, in a literal sense, *heaven and earth shall pass away*, and the whole fabric of this visible world shall be dissolved before my majestic presence; *but my words shall not pass away* till they are perfectly fulfilled, and the efficacy of them shall remain in the eternal world which shall succeed these transitory scenes. 32 33

But though Jerusalem shall be destroyed before the generation disappear, yet *of that* great decisive *day* which is appointed for the dissolution and the judgment of the world, *and* of the *hour* Mark XIII. 32

[h] *This generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled.*] Though Brennius, and *Mede* (in his *Works*, p. 752), have here the honour to be followed by so great an authority as Dr. *Sykes* (of *Christianity*, p. 60), yet I must beg leave to say that I cannot think the texts they collect sufficient to prove that by *this generation* [η γενεα αυτη] we are here to understand *the Jewish nation through all ages*; as if *our Lord* intended to say they should continue a distinct people to the *judgment day*. What I have expressed in the *paraphrase* is plainly the most obvious sense of the words, and seems to me an evident key to the whole context, especially when compared with Mat. xvi. 28. *There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.* See *note* i, on that text, Vol. VI. p. 469.

i *Of*

SECT. CLXII.

hour or season when it shall open upon men, and shall bring on their final sentence, there is *no one* who *knows* the precise time[i], *neither the angels in heaven, nor* even *the Son* of man himself[k], with respect to his human nature, or as a part of what he is commissioned to reveal; for though it be determinded by the Divine decree, it is not known to any *but my Father alone*, or the indwelling Godhead, from whom nothing can be concealed: and, as he does not think fit to disclose it, let it be your care to improve this uncertainty as an engagement to the most diligent and constant preparation for its coming.

Mark XIII. 32. hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, [but my Father only.][MAT. XXIV. 36.]

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us now raise our contemplations to that awful day when all that was *figuratively* spoken of *the destruction of Jerusalem* shall be *literally* accomplished; and let us consider our own intimate concern in it. Where will our hope and comfort, our light, and our safety be, when *the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not* Mat. xxiv. 29 *give her light*, when *the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken?* where, indeed, unless the almighty *God*, the everlasting *Jehovah*, by whose voice they were created, and by whose hand they shall be dashed in pieces again, shall condescend to be *our light, and our salvation?* (Psal. xxviii. 1.) And if he indeed be so, *then* we may *lift up our heads* with joy; as knowing that our complete *redemption draweth nigh*, even that long expected *day* which, with all its solemn horrors, has still been the brightest object of our faith and our hopes.

Luke xxi. 28

Then

[i] *Of that day and hour no one knows.*] I cannot agree with Dr. Clarke in referring *this verse* to the *destruction of Jerusalem*; the particular *day* of which was not a matter of great importance; and as for the *season* of it, I see not how it could properly be said to be entirely *unknown* after such an express declaration that it should be in *that generation*; and yet at some considerable distance, for otherwise there would not have been room for the gradual accomplishment of the many predictions uttered above. It seems therefore much fitter, with Dr. Whitby (after Grotius), to explain it of the *last day*, when *heaven and earth shall pass away*, which is sometimes called *that day* with a peculiar emphasis; a phrase answering to *the great* or *remarkable day*. Compare 2 Tim. i. 12, 18, and iv. 8.

[k] *Nor* even *the Son* of man himself.] There is not any thing in this assertion of *our Lord*, if we consider the *two natures* in him, that is inconsistent with his *true divinity*. For what is applicable only to *one nature* is frequently expressed in terms inclusive of his *whole person*. Thus, as the endowments of his *human nature* were communicated in a gradual manner to him, Jesus is said to have *increased in wisdom* (Luke ii. 52.) and even while he was *on earth*, as he was present every where with respect to his *Divine nature*, he speaks of himself as *the Son of man* who *is in heaven*. (John iii. 13.) Nor is it at all more strange that he should here be said *not to know the day* appointed for the final *judgment*, than that it should be elsewhere said that *the Lord of glory* was *crucified* (1 Cor. ii. 5), and that *God purchased the church with his own blood*. (Acts xx. 28.)

[a] *That*

Then shall *the Son of man* indeed *come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory*, and *send his angels* to summon *his elect*, and to assemble them *from one end of heaven to the other: for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.* (1 Thess. iv. 16.) May we hear the summons with joy, and *stand in our lot* among his chosen ones! What though the *day* and *season* be *unknown?* It is enough for us that we know that all these interposing days and years, be they ever so numerous, will at length be past; for the *promise* of the great Redeemer is our security, and he *will hasten it in its time.* (Isa. lx. 22.) SECT. CLXII. Mat. XXIV. 30, 31 Mark XIII. 32

These visible *heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the earth shall be removed* out of its place; but the sure *word of his promise shall never pass away;* even that *promise* which is engaged for the salvation of his people. Let us often review it; let us firmly realize it to our souls, and, *seeing we look for such things,* let us seriously consider *what manner of persons we ought to be in holy conversation and godliness.* (2 Pet. iii. 11, 14.) 31

SECT. CLXIII.

Our Lord urges the suddenness of his appearance as an engagement to constant watchfulness, repeating several things which he had formerly said on that subject. Mat. XXIV. 37, *to the end.* Mark XIII. 33, *to the end.* Luke XXI. 34—36.

MAT. XXIV. 37.

BUT as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the son of man be,

MAT. XXIV. 37.

OUR Lord having told them in the preceding words, that though the time of his appearance to the general judgment was uncertain, yet the destruction of Jerusalem should happen before that generation of men was passed away, went on with his discourse, and added, *But* this I will in general inform you, that, *as* sudden and unthought-of as the deluge was which came upon the world in *the days of Noah, so* unexpected and surprising *also shall the coming of the Son of man,* to execute his vengeance, *be. For as in the days which were before the* universal *deluge, they were* so inconsiderate and secure, that they went on with all their usual business, and spent their time in entertainments, *eating and drinking, marrying* wives, *and giving* their daughters *in marriage,* thinking of nothing but present indulgence and future settlements in the world; SECT. CLXIII. Mat. XXIV. 37

38 For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, 38

SECT. CLXIII.

Mat. XXIV.

world[a]; and went on thus, in contempt of every serious admonition, even *until the* very *day that Noah entered into the ark; And knew* 39 *not*, nor suspected, that any evil was approaching, *till the deluge came* with an irresistible violence, *and bore them all away* with a torrent of destruction: *so also shall the coming of the Son of man be;* and, notwithstanding men have been so frequently and plainly warned of it, yet multitudes shall be surprised in an unprepared state. (Compare Luke xvii. 26, 27. p. 62.)

39 And knew not, until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

40 I formerly told you, with relation to the temporal desolation of your country, and I now repeat it, That of *two men* who *shall then be* at work together *in the field, the one shall be seized,* 41 *and the other dismissed*[b]; And of *two women* who *shall be grinding* corn *at the* same *mill, the one shall be seized, and the other dismissed:* (compare Luke xvii. 35, 36. p. 64.) And I may say the like with respect to that important event of the final judgment; many who have been engaged in the same station and employments, and who were intimately conversant with each other, shall then be found exceedingly different in their characters and states; and some of them shall be made, the prisoners of Divine justice, while others shall not only be spared, but be signally favoured by God.

40 Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left:

41 Two *women shall be* grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left.

And

[a] *They were eating and drinking,* &c.] Dr. *Woodward* (in his *Theory of the Earth,* p. 98) thinks these were modest expressions to signify their giving themselves up to all the extravagancies of riot and lust; and *Wolfius (in loc.)* has most learnedly proved that γαμισθαι is often used in a very *criminal sense.* But how great reason soever there may be to believe that the Antediluvian sinners did so, these words may be intended to express no more than the *security* and *gaiety* with which they pursued the usual employments and amusements of life when they were on the very brink of utter destruction.

[b] *Two man shall then be in the field,* &c.] Though in the *paraphrase,* for its better connection, I have introduced these words *incidentally,* and hinted how they may *allusively* be accommodated to *the day of judgment,* yet I doubt not they originally refer to *the destruction of Jerusalem,* to which alone they are properly applicable. After *this paragraph* there is not a word peculiar to *that;* but many circumstances are introduced which refer to *the day of judgment* (and of *death,* as transmitting to it), and which can only be thus understood. I therefore humbly conceive that the grand *transition,* about which *commentators* are so much divided, and so generally mistaken, is made precisely after these *two verses.*—*Our Lord,* in the following verses of Matthew and Mark, directs their thoughts to that *final solemnity* in which they are so highly concerned, by repeating almost in the same words the cautions and advices he had formerly given, Luke xii. 35, *& seq.* sect. cxiv. in which whole context (as I there observed, *note* f, Vol. VI. p. 582) there is no reference to those *temporal calamities* that were coming on the Jews, which have been here the subject of almost the whole preceding discourse. And the remembrance of what had passed on the former occasion might more easily lead them into the distinct understanding of what was now added. Though it may not be improper to recollect that the same pious care in their temper and conduct, which would be a preparative against *national judgments,* and entitle them to the special protection of providence in them, would also secure them from any unwelcome surprise by a call to the *tribunal* of God.

LUKE XXI. 34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 Watch ye therefore, [MARK, take heed, watch and pray always; that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man: for ye know not when the time is.] for what hour your Lord doth come. MATT. XXIV. 42. MARK XIII. 33.]

And therefore, that no calamities of life, or sect. clxx.
solicitudes of indulgence, may be dreaded to
that *your hearts be overcharged* [e], and your Luke
hearts be rendered [f], and your minds powers XXI. 34
impressed and engaged *in gluttony and drunkenness*, or distracted with worldly *cares*, as many,
and so this terrible and important *day*, of which I have been speaking, *should come unexpected upon you. For* the character of the gene- 35
rality of mankind at that time will be such, that it *shall come as the* greatest part of *all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth* [d] as a snare upon a thoughtless bird which in the midst of its security finds itself inextricably taken. Compare Eccles. ix. 12. Let me *therefore* address this 36
most serious exhortation to you with an earnestness proportionable to its importance, *Watch* ye against every temptation to negligence and sin, *take heed* of every thing which might lull you into a dangerous security, *and pray always*, with the most fervent importunity, *that* through Divine grace *you may be accounted worthy to escape all these* calamitous and destructive *things which shall* assuredly *come to pass* just in the manner I have described them, *and* may be happily enabled, even in the day of his universal judgment, *to stand* forth with courage and acceptance *before the Son of man* [e]. *for you know not when the time* of his appearance *is*, [*or*] *at what hour*

e *Your hearts be overcharged.*] The word βαρηθωσιν properly signifies *burdened*, or *pressed down*; and so very elegantly and strongly expresses the hateful consequence of intemperance, and the *load* which it brings on those rational faculties which are the glory of the human nature.—The reader will observe that Luke's account of this discourse is very short, in comparison with that of Matthew and Mark, for this obvious reason, that he had given the chief heads of it before, partly in a discourse of *our Lord's last coming*, which was delivered to a very numerous assembly in Galilee, (Luke xii. 35—48, sect. cxiv.) and partly in another discourse, relating only to *the destruction of Jerusalem*, which was delivered in his journey thither at the *feast of dedication*: (Luke xvii. 20—37, sect. cxxviii.) Here therefore he chooses to omit what had been inserted on either of those occasions; as, John, who probably wrote after the accomplishment of this prophecy, entirely omits it, as already so largely recorded by the former *three*; from whom, considering the circumstance of time, it came with infinitely better grace than it could afterwards have done from him.

d *It shall come on all them that dwell*, &c.] The exhortations that are connected with this clause limit the extent of the word [*all*] to a considerable number; for were it to be taken otherwise there could have been no room to offer them.

e *To stand before the Son of man.*] I do not apprehend that this is merely the counterpart of *escaping the things* spoken of before. There were thousands of the Jews that by one providence or another *escaped temporal destruction*, who could with no propriety be said *to stand before the Son of man at his coming*. I have therefore paraphrased this *latter clause* as an advance upon the *former*, which gives this context a greater connection, and juster distinction, than the order in which most *harmonies* place these *verses*.

SECT. clxiii.

hour your Lord does come to summon you before him.

Mat. XXIV. 43

But this you know, and would do well to consider it, *that if the master of a house* that has at any time been plundered by robbers *had known* exactly *in what watch* of the night *the thief would* have *come, he would* undoubtedly *have watched* then; *and* taking care to be provided for him, *would not have suffered his house to be broke open* or have left the thief to make his advan-

44 tage by coming at an unexpected time. And *therefore*, as it is of so much greater consequence on this occasion that you should be prepared against an unseasonable surprise, *be ye also ready* and learn from such a common occurrence to be upon your guard; *for* I tell you again, That *at an hour when you think not* of it, *the Son of man cometh;* and multitudes of people will be as much surprised as if they had never heard in their whole lives that he would come at all. (Compare Luke xii. 39, 40, Vol. VI. p. 581.)

MAT. XXIV. 43. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man cometh.

Mark XIII. 34

[*For the Son of man is*] in this respect *as a man travelling to a distant country, who, as he was leaving his house, gave authority to his* head-*servants*, to direct and oversee the rest in their business, *and* assigned *to every man* in the family *his* proper *work, and* particularly *commanded the porter to watch*, and to see to it that the doors were properly secured, and ready to be opened to him at his return.

MARK XIII. 34. *For the Son of man is* as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

Mat. XXIV. 45

And *who now*, do you my apostles suppose, *is the faithful and prudent servant*, of *whom his* 45 *Lord has* so good an opinion as to have *appointed* him *ruler over* the rest of *his household, to give them* [*their*] proper portion of *food in due season?* You must easily apprehend that the expression may with the utmost propriety be applied to that high office with which you are invested, and to the confidence placed in your

46 integrity and wisdom. And, to excite you to discharge this office with the greatest fidelity, let me add, *Happy* indeed *is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find thus employed* in the proper duties of his important office, distributing to each his portion in a proper

47 manner[f]. *Verily I say unto you* again, as I formerly

MAT. XXIV. 45. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

46 Blessed *is* that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

47 Verily I say unto

[f] *Happy is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh*, &c.] As no peculiar *rewards* were conferred on any of the *apostles*, or other faithful *ministers*, at the time of *Christ's coming to destroy Jerusalem*, this clause sufficiently proves a reference to the *final judgment*; and will not permit us with Dr. Hammond, to understand the *Gnostics*,

to you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

formerly did, *That he will* perfer him as highly as if a man should *make* his domestic steward, who had served *him* faithfully, *ruler* or director *of all his estate*, as a reward for his care in the due management of his office. (Compare Luke xii. 42—44, Vol. VI. p. 585.)

SECT. CLXIII.

Mat. XXIV. 47

48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

49 And shall begin to smite *his* fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken:

But, on the other hand, the faithless wretch that is dishonest in the execution of so high a charge shall be severely punished: and *if that wicked servant shall* presume to *say in his heart*, *My Lord delays his coming: And shall* on that presumption *begin to beat* and abuse those of *his fellow-servants*, who are more faithful than himself, *and to eat and drink* in a riotous and extravagant manner *with the* debauched and *drunken* part of them, or with other dissolute persons; he will do it at his peril: For *the lord of that servant shall* certainly *come in a day when he does not expect* [*him*] *and in an hour when he is not* at all *aware*, and cannot have time to put on a face of better order, or to provide and invent artful excuses; *And*, seeing him in the midst of his revels and usurpations, he shall scourge him so severely, that he *shall* even *cut him asunder*[g], *and appoint* [*him*] *his portion with hypocrites*, the most odious kind of sinners in the sight of God:[h] with these shall this false creature be righteously doomed to dwell for ever in those doleful regions where *there shall be* nothing but *weeping and gnashing of teeth*, proportionable to his former indulgence and luxury, and to the importance of that trust which he so wickedly betrayed. (Compare Luke xii. 45, 46. Vol. VI. p. 585.)

48 49 50 51

50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of;

51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping ing and gnashing of teeth.

MARK XIII. 35. Watch

Let me then caution you, O my apostles and ministers,

Mark XIII. 35

Gnostics, or, with Dr. Whitby, the *apostate Jews*, as particularly intended by *the wicked servant* mentioned afterwards; which seems plainly to refer to a debauched and persecuting *clergy*, hypocritically pretending to a distinguished zeal for Christian forms and institutions.

g *Shall cut him asunder.*] That *tearing* and *cutting* persons *into several pieces*, was a cruel *punishment* used among the *ancients*, none acquainted with antiquity can doubt; and Wolfius on this text has demonstrated it more copiously than any other *critic* I have seen. Yet, as the criminal is *here* represented as surviving this punishment, and consigned over to *wailing and gnashing of teeth*, after it had been inflicted, I therefore, as before (Luke xii. 46.) must understand it of being *severely scourged*, after which idle slaves were often thrown into a prison, where they lived miserably in every respect. To this *our Lord* alludes with a most obvious propriety. See sect. cxiv. *note* l.

h *His portion with hypocrites.*] *Mahomet* in his *Alcoran* mentions *Seven Caverns in hell*, the deepest and most wretched of which is to be inhabited by *hypocrites*, (*Sur.* iv. v. 144.) Elsner, who takes this for a Jewish notion, by a very singular criticism supposes it, or something analogous to it, referred to *here*, and Rev. xxi. 8. where he thinks *liars* are the same with *hypocrites*; and observes very precariously, that taking *the fearful and unbelieving*, or those that through cowardice apostatize, for the *first* sort of criminals, *liars* are the *seventh* class.

SECT. clxiii.

ministers, never to suffer this important exhortation, which I have now been giving you, to be forgot in any circumstance of life; but *watch ye therefore* continually, *for ye know not when the master of the house cometh*, whether *in the evening*-watch, *or at mid-night, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning:* Early and late hold yourselves in a prepared posture, *lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping*, and negligent of your proper duty. *And what I say to you* in public characters, *I say to all* my disciples, in every station of life, and in every age, *Watch;* for in every age and station you will have need to do it, and security may be attended with the most fatal consequences.

Mark XIII. 35. 36 37

Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh (at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning:)

36 Lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.

37 And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT slothful hearts must we have if these *repeated admonitions* do not awaken us; even *line upon line, and precept upon precept?* The *patience of God is waiting* upon us, as it did on the old world, *while the ark was preparing:*) (1 Pet. iii. 20.) May we take the warning, and seek shelter before the door be shut against us! Let us therefore *take heed, lest sensuality and secular cares overcharge* and depress *our hearts*, and amuse us with vain delusions, till *sudden* and unavoidable *destruction* come upon us. (1 Thess. v. 3.)

Luke xxi. 36, Mat. xxiv. 42 Mark xiii. 33. Luke xxi. 34.

We are by profession the *domestics* of *Christ*. Let us attend to the *offices* he has assigned us, though he seem at a distance. Let us diligently *wait his coming*, at whatever season. Let his *ministers* especially wait it; and be solicitous, that they may be *found so doing*, conducting themselves like *wise stewards of the mysteries of God*, dispensing to every one his portion of *food in due season*. Then will our *account* be honourable, and our *reward* glorious.

Mark xiii. 34. Mat. xxiv. 45, 46 47

May God deliver us from the guilt and condemnation of the cruel, and imperious, and the luxurious *servant*, who *began to beat his fellows, and to eat and drink with the drunken;* since we are expressly told his dreadful doom! Justly does *our Lord* declare that to such a one he will *appoint a portion with hypocrites*, terrible as their portion must be; for no hypocrisy can be baser than to call ourselves the *servants* and *ministers of Christ*, while we are the slaves of ambition, avarice, and intemperance. Wherever such are found, under whatever mask and form, may he reform them by his grace, or disarm them of that power and influence which they continually abuse to his dishonour, and to their own aggravated damnation! Let us in the mean time

48, 49 51

time be *exhorting each other daily, while it is called to-day, lest any* by insensible degrees *be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*, (Heb. iii. 13); and let us always remember that every exhortation which we give to others returns with redoubled weight upon ourselves. SECT. CLXIII.

SECT. CLXIV.

Christ enforces his exhortation to watchfulness by the parable of the ten virgins. Mat. XXV. 1—13.

MAT. XXV. 1.
THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamp, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

MAT. XXV. 1.

OUR Lord, in order to impress upon the minds of his hearers a concern about the great and awful day of future judgment, to which the latter part of his preceding discourse had so plainly referred, went on to represent it under a variety of most lively figures, and particularly by the following parable; saying, *Then*, or in that day of final account, when the faithful servant shall be rewarded, and the treacherous hypocrite so severely punished, *shall the kingdom of heaven*, or the state of things under the gospel dispensation, appear to *be like* the case of *ten virgins*[a], *who*, being invited to a marriage-feast (which, according to the custom of this country, was to be celebrated in the night), *took their lamps* as soon as it begun to grow dark, *and went out* together *to meet the bridegroom*, and to light him to the house where the banquet was to be kept. SECT. CLXIV. Mat. XXIV. 1

2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

And it appeared by their conduct that *five of them were prudent* persons, *and five* of them were *foolish* and inconsiderate, who made no provision against an accident which might very naturally happen. 2

3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them.

They that were foolish, when they took their lamps, went forth with them lighted, but *did not take any oil with them* beside that 3

[a] *Ten virgins.*] This whole *parable* contains a plain reference to the custom which prevailed among the Jews then, and still prevails among many *eastern* nations: (see *The Customs of the Jews and Indians compared*, p. 41, *& seq.*) The *bridegroom* used to conduct his *bride* home in the *evening* by the light of *lamps*, which were used (as *Elsner* shews, *Observ.* Vol. I. p. 114, 115) by the Jews and Romans on the like occasion: they were carried by *bride-maids*, who used afterwards to sup with them; and some tell us their number must at least be *ten*.—It seems, from the circumstances of this *parable*, that if any of the neighbours, besides those who were directly invited, thought it worth their while to pay their respect to the new-married couple, it was esteemed a decent piece of civility to admit them to a share in the *bridal-feast*, if they made their appearance at a proper time.

[b] *In*

SECT. CLXIV.

that which was at first poured in: *Whereas the prudent* maidens, considering that they might perhaps be obliged to wait some hours, *took* a reserve of *oil* with them *in their vessels*, which they carried *with their lamps*, to feed the flame when the former stock should be wasted.

Mat. XXIV. 4

4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5 *But while the bridegroom* for a long time *delayed* his coming, as they were sitting near the place from whence they expected him to come, *they all* of them *slumbered, and* at length *fell* fast asleep. *And in the* very *middle of the night*[b], *there was a* loud *cry made* in the street, *Behold, the bridegroom is coming, go ye out* immediately *to meet him*, and arise to attend the procession according to order.

5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.

7 *Then all those virgins* presently *arose, and*, to prepare for his reception, *dressed their lamps*, that they might shine as bright, and appear as clean, as possible. *And the foolish* damsels in great surprise *said to the prudent, Give us* some *of your oil, for* you seem to have a great stock with you; whereas *our lamps are gone out*, and all our oil is spent. *But the prudent replied* [*We cannot do it*], *lest there should not be enough for us and you*, and so we should all be left on a sudden without light, and the bridegroom be disappointed and affronted, *but rather go ye to them that sell* oil in the neighbourhood, *and buy* some *for yourselves*, as soon as possible, that ye may follow and join in the procession[c].

7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out.

9 But the wise answered, saying, *Not so*: lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

10 *And while they went to buy* it at that inconvenient time of night, *the bridegroom* and his retinue *came; and those* maidens *that were ready* to receive him joined the company; and when they came to the bridal-house, they *went in with him to the marriage-feast; and*, to prevent disturbance, *the door was shut* and fastened.

10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut.

Mat. XXV. 11

And some time after the other virgins also came, and, knocking at the door, called with great im-

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying,

b *In the middle of the night.*] Perhaps the tradition, which Jerom mentions, that asserted Christ would come to judgment *at midnight*, might be borrowed from hence; though to be sure it is a very absurd one, since that can be the case only under one meridian at a time.—A celebrated *commentator* has clouded *this parable* exceedingly, by attempting to explain it of the different effects *Christ's admonition* concerning the *destruction of Jerusalem* would have on different persons.

c *Buy for yourselves.*] This seems merely an ornamental circumstance; and it is strange that any *Popish* writers should consider it as favouring their doctrine of a stock of *merits* in the church, founded on *works of supererogation*; since, if it referred to them at all (which there is no reason to imagine), it would rather expose than encourage any dependance upon them.

saying, Lord, Lord, open to us..

importunity, *saying*, *Sir*, *Sir*, we desire you would *open to us*, who are also some of your guests, though by an unfortunate accident we are come a little too late. *But he*, being unwilling to be disturbed in the feast, and to open the door again, *answered* them, *saying*, *Truly*, *I say unto you*, *I know you not* whence you are[d]: my house is already furnished with guests, and I will admit no more. Thus these thoughtless creatures entirely lost both their labour and expence, meeting with nothing but disappointment and shame. And such will be your case if you content yourselves with a mere empty profession of religion, while you sink into a careless and negligent conduct, and remain destitute of that principle of real piety which ought to give lustre and vigour to it.

SECT. clxiv.

Mat. XXV. 12

12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

See to it, *therefore*, that you maintain a constant *watch*, not presuming on preparations to be made hereafter; *for* your removal may be much more sudden then you are aware, and *ye know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of man cometh* to receive his prepared people to himself, and for ever to exclude the hypocrite and the sinner from the entertainments of his heavenly kingdom. 13

IMPROVEMENT.

Let us apply our hearts to the obvious instructions which this well known *parable* so naturally suggests. We are under a *religious profession:* our *lamps* are in our hands; and we *go forth* as those that expect *to meet Christ;* as those that desire and hope to be admitted to the *marriage-supper of the Lamb*. But, alas, how few are there that are truly *prepared* for such a blessedness! Would to God there were reason to hope that the *Christian church* were so equally divided, that *five* of *ten* in it had the *oil* of Divine grace in their hearts, to render them *burning and shining lights!* 2, 3, 4

Mat. XXV. 1.

Let even such as have it be upon their guard; for *our Lord* intimates that *the wise* as well as *the foolish virgins* are too apt to *slumber and sleep*, and carelessly to intermit that *watch* which they ought constantly to maintain. There may be, at an unexpected 5 6

d *I know you not.*] This circumstance in the *parable* is not absurd; for nothing intimated a personal acquaintance with them, and guests asking admittance with such a pretence might have been multiplied beyond all reason and convenience. At least its significancy in the application is very apparent and important.

a *To*

SECT. CLXIV. pected time, *a midnight cry.* Happy the souls that can hear it with pleasure; being not only habitually but actually *ready* to obey the summons! Happy they that have their *loins girded*, and their *lamps burning!* (Luke xii. 35.)

8, 9 *The foolish virgins* saw their error too late; they applied to *the wise*; but their application was vain. And as vain will the hope of those be who trust to the *intercession* of *departed saints*, or any supposed redundancy of *merit in them*, while they are themselves
10–12 strangers to a holy temper and life. In vain will they cry, *Lord, Lord, open to us. The door* of mercy will be *shut* for ever, and the *workers of iniquity* utterly disowned. The *day of grace* has its limits; and for those that have trifled it away there remaineth nothing *but the blackness of darkness for ever!* (Jude, ver. 13.)

SECT. CLXV.

Christ repeats the parable of the talents in a form something different from that in which he had before delivered it. Mat. XXV. 14—30.

Mat. XXV. 14.

SECT. CLXV. Mat. XXV. 14. JESUS, having delivered the preceding parable of the virgins, went on farther to illustrate the subject, by the repetition of a parable resembling one which he had used some time before. Luke xix. 12—27. [illegible]

[illegible]

Mat. XXV. 14.

FOR the kingdom of [illegible] is a man [illegible] who called [illegible] servants, and [illegible] them his goods.

[illegible]

to his several ability: and straightway took his journey.

prospect there might reasonably be of his improving it: *and immediately he went away*, and set forward on his journey. SECT. CLXV.

Mat. XXV.

16 Then he that had received the five talents, went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents.

And he who had received the five talents, went and engaged in business, *and traded with them* in so diligent a manner during the absence of his master, that he doubled the sum, *and produced five talents more.* 16

17 And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two.

And in like manner he who [*had received*] *the two*, was so industrious in employing them to the best advantage, that *he also gained two more.* 17

18 But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

But he who had received but *one* talent, being displeased that he had been intrusted with no more, was seized with sullen indolence and servile fear, and *went away* directly, *and* attempted no improvement of it, but privately *digged* [*a hole*] *in the earth, and hid his master's money* in it, till he should return home. 18

19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

Thus the matter passed off for a while; *but after some considerable time the master of those servants comes* home, *and makes up his accounts with them*, demanding from each the sum with which he had been intrusted, and inquiring what was the interest he had gained by it. 19

20 And so he that had received five talents came, and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained besides them five talents more.

And he who had received the five talents came near, *and brought other five talents* with them, *saying, Sir*, thou wast pleased so far to intrust me, that *thou didst deliver to me five talents*, when setting out on thy journey; and such is the improvement I have made of them, that *behold, I have* doubled the sum, and *gained to them five talents more.* 20

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

And his master said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant [b], *thou hast been faithful in* the management of *a few things*; and, having proved thee to be so in this lower trust, *I will* prefer thee to a higher, and *set thee over many* more valuable *things* than these: in the mean time, *enter thou into the joy of thy master*, and share with me in the banquet prepared for myself and my friends on this happy occasion of my return. 21

22 He also that had received two talents, came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me

He also who had received the two talents came forwards, *and said, Sir*, thou wert so indulgent, that *thou didst deliver to me* at thy going hence *two* 22

b *Well done, thou good and faithful servant.*] The original word ευ has a peculiar force and energy, far beyond what I can exactly express in English. It was used by *auditors* or *spectators* in any public exercise, to express the highest *applause* when any part had been *excellently performed. Bravely done!* comes something near it, but is not equally elegant or forcible.

SECT. clxv.

Mat. XXV.

two talents, which I have endeavoured to employ as carefully as I could; and *behold*, by trafficking with them *I have gained two other talents* 23 *to them.* And *his master said unto him*, as he had done to the former, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant*, thy care and diligence is as agreeable to me as if thy trust had been greater; *thou hast been* evidently *faithful in a few things;* and *I will* in like manner prefer thee to a higher trust, and *set thee over many* more valuable *things* than these: in the mean time, come to the entertainment now prepared, and *enter thou* with thy companion *into the joy of thy master.*

me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents besides them.

23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24 *But he also who had received the one talent*[c], *came and said*, with a sullen and gloomy countenance, *Sir, I knew thee, that thou art a severe man*, and that it is a very difficult thing to please thee, since thou art so exact with thy servants, as even to think of *reaping where thou didst not sow, and* of *gathering whence thou hadst not scattered* any thing that could be taken up; requiring more in many instances than it is possible for 25 them to do, be they ever so careful: *And being terrified* with this thought, I concluded that, if by any accident thy money should miscarry under my management, thou wouldst shew me no mercy; and therefore *I went away*, as soon as I had received it, *and hid thy talent in the earth*, in a place where it has been very secure; so that I have now taken it up, and *behold*, [*there*] *thou hast thine own* again, and wilt find it to be the full sum I received.

24 Then he which had received the one talent came, and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast *that is* thine.

26 *And his master answering, said unto him* with a just indignation, *Thou wicked and slothful servant*, what a false and scandalous excuse is this, and how easily may it be retorted upon thee! For if it were indeed, as thou maliciously sayest, and *thou knewest* that I was such a tyrannical and unreasonable man as thou hast described, even *that I reap where I did not sow, and* expect to *gather* something up from *whence I had not scattered* it, thou mightest certainly depend upon it that I should expect to reap where I had sowed, and

26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

[c] *He who had received the one talent.*] This may intimate that we are accountable for the *smallest advantages* with which we are intrusted; but it cannot imply that they who have *received much* will ordinarily *pass their account best;* for it is too plain in fact, that most of those whose dignity, wealth, and genius, give them the greatest opportunities of service, seem to forget they have either any *master in heaven* to serve, or any *future reckoning* to expect; and many of them render themselves much more criminal than this *wicked and slothful servant* who *hid his talent in the earth.*

and to gather where I had scattered that which, in this instance, as well as the others, might have been an increasing seed. And *therefore*, if thou hadst been afraid to employ it in trade, as these my faithful servants have done, *thou shouldst have put my money to the bankers* upon sufficient security; *and* thus *when I came I might* at least *have received mine own with* the common *interest.* And then, turning to the attendants, he said, *Take ye therefore the talent* which he has thus abused *from him, and give it to him that has ten talents*, as a farther token of my acceptance and favour. *For* I would have all my servants observe that I shall constantly make this a maxim in my behaviour, That *to every one that hath*, and diligently improves what he hath, more *shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not* improved it to any valuable purpose, *even what he hath shall be taken away:* (compare Mat. xiii. 12. Mark iv. 25. Luke viii. 18. xix. 26.) Such unfaithful creatures must expect to be stripped of all, and not imagine that I will perpetually suffer my trusts to be abused, and my business to be neglected. *And*, to deter others from such an idle and unfaithful conduct, *cast ye the unprofitable servant*, who has so wickedly abused my goodness, *into the* dreadful *darkness which is without;* and *there*, instead of the delight and joy to which my faithful servants shall be introduced, there *shall be* nothing but *weeping and gnashing of the teeth.* Now this horrible darkness, to which my parable refers, is no other than the dungeon of hell; to which every unfaithful servant must expect to be condemned in that approaching day of general account: fail not therefore to observe and report what I now say, that it may give the alarm to all who need it.

SECT. CLXV.

Mat. XXV. 27

27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away, even that which he hath.

30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

28

29

30

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT can excite us to a becoming care and activity in the duties of life, if we are deaf to those various and important motives which this excellent *parable* suggests? We have each of us received our *talents*, whether *five*, or *two*, or *one*; and if we be *faithful*, it matters not much under which of these classes we fall. Our acceptance and reward will be proportionable to our diligence; nor will any be blamed because he has not *received five*, though many will be condemned for *neglecting one.*

Mat. XXV. 15

SECT. CLXV. Yet a little while, and *our Lord comes to reckon with us*, and even now his eye is continually upon us. Let us ask our own
Ver. 19 souls, with what temper, with what courage, with what cheer-
24 fulness, shall we appear before him? Let us think of *that appearance*, with awe, but not with terror. Away with every *unjust thought* and reasoning (with whatever artifice it be excused, with whatever honourable name it be dignified) that would represent him as *a rigorous and severe Master*, and produce a servile dread, which would cut the sinews of industry, and sink the soul into a sullen negligent despair.

30 Whatever our particular snares in life may be, let us think of the *doom* of the *slothful servant*, to awaken our souls, and to deter us from every degree of unfaithfulness. And, on the other hand, let us often reflect on that unutterable transport which will overflow the breast of every real *Christian*, when his gracious *Master* shall condescend, in so honourable a manner, to commemorate his honest, though feeble, attempts of service; and shall
21, 23 say, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!* May *that joy* be the great object of our hopes and pursuits! and may our daily care in the improvement of every *talent* lodged in our hands be a token to us that it will be sure and great!

SECT. CLXVI.

Christ concludes this important discourse with a plain and affecting description of the last judgment, and of the different sentences then to be passed and executed on the righteous and the wicked. Mat. XXV. 31, *to the end.*

MAT. XXV. 31.

SECT. CLXVI. OUR Lord, having hitherto described his last coming in a parabolical manner, thought it
Mat. XXV. 31 proper to conclude his discourse with a plainer account of it, which might serve as a key to many preceding passages; and he added, *When* that great and illustrious Person, whom you have so often heard of, and so well known, by the title of *the Son of man, shall come in* all *his* final *glory*[a], in

MAT. XXV. 31.

WHEN the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the

[a] *When the Son of man shall come in his glory.*] If we observe the correspondence between these words and those in chap. xxiv. 30, 31 (p. 246), it may seem probable that Christ intended to teach his disciples to conceive of his *first coming* to the destruction of Jerusalem as a kind of emblem of his *final appearance to judgment*; and consequently it will authorise us to use some of the texts in the former chapter when discoursing of that great and important *day*.—I hope every reader will observe

SECT. CLXVI.

Mat. XXV. 31

the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.

in the most public honours of his mediatorial kingdom, to which all things shall then be completely subjected, (1 Cor. xv. 25, 28:) *and all the holy angels*, who have long been subjected to him as his ministering servants, shall come *with him; then shall he sit upon his glorious* and majestic *throne*, conspicuous in the eyes of the whole world, as the universal Judge.

32 And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

32 *And all the nations* of men, who have lived on earth from the remotest ages of time, *shall be assembled before him* [b]: *and he shall separate them from each other*, according to their different characters, which he most perfectly knows, with as much ease *as a shepherd separates the sheep* which belong to his flock *from the goats* which may be mingled with them, and places them in distinct companies.

33 And he shall set the sheep on his right-hand, but the goats on the left.

33 *And he shall set the sheep*, that is, the righteous, whom he will own as such, and whose characters resemble the innocence, meekness, and usefulness of that animal, *on his right-hand*, in token of his favour to them, and of the farther honours he will bestow upon them: *but the goats*, that is, the wicked, who are so offensive to him, that they may justly be represented by goats, he shall place *on [his] left*, to intimate his displeasure against them, and their final removal from amongst his people; nor shall the haughtiest and mightiest sinner be able to resist that appointment by which he is placed in this situation to avoid his sentence [c]. (Compare Ezek. xxxiv. 17, 18.)

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right-hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom

34 *Then*, when by the ministry of the angelic attendants they are thus separated from each other, *the* great *King* of glory and of grace, who presides over this grand solemnity, *shall*, with the most condescending endearment, *say to them on*

serve with what majesty and grandeur *our Lord* speaks of himself in this *section*, which is one of the noblest instances of the *true sublime* that I have any where read; and indeed few passages, even in the sacred writings themselves, seem to equal it. Methinks we can hardly read it without imagining ourselves before the awful tribunal it describes.

[b] *All the nations shall be assembled before him.*] Had the notion which prevailed among some later Jews, that the Gentiles should have *no part* in the *resurrection*, been as old as *our Lord's* time, it is easy to see these words might have been understood as a direct intended opposition to it.

[c] Nor shall the haughtiest sinner, &c.] I can imagine no more magnificent image than this; the assembled world distinguished with such unerring penetration, and distributed into two grand classes, with as much ease as *sheep* and *goats* are ranged by *a shepherd* in different companies.—The propriety with which *our Lord* speaks of himself in the following words, by the title of *a King*, is very observable; and it adds unutterable beauty to the condescending words he is represented as speaking on this great occasion.

[d] *I was*

SECT. clxvi.

Mat. XXV.

on his right hand, Come, ye blessed and favourite people *of my Father*, approach yet nearer to me, that having been assessors with me in what yet remains of this day's awful proceedings (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.) you may go in with me to *inherit the kingdom* of holiness, glory, and joy, appointed for your portion in the Divine purpose and decree, and *prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* And I am now descended to receive you to this kingdom with all these public marks of approbation and honour; *for* I well remember your good deeds in the days of your flesh, and felt my own bowels refreshed by them, when *I was hungry, and ye gave me* [*food*] *to eat;* when *I was thirsty and ye caused me to drink;* when *I was a stranger, and ye took me in* like one of your own families: When [*I was*] *naked, and ye clothed me;* when *I was sick, and ye looked after me*[d]: when *I was* shut up *in* solitude, confinement, and affliction of a *prison, and ye came* kindly *to* condole with *me* in my sufferings, and to relieve my necessities there.

Then shall the righteous, in humble amazement, be ready to *answer him, and say Lord*, what service were we ever capable of doing thee, that can deserve such notice from thee? *When did we* ever *see thee hungry, and fed* [*thee?*] *or thirsty, and caused* [*thee*] *to drink?* *Or when did we* ever *see thee* in the destitute condition of *a stranger, and took* [*thee*] *in? or naked, and clothed* [*thee?*]. *Or when did we* ever *see thee sick, or in prison, and came to thee* for thy relief? We never saw thee, blessed Lord, in such circumstances of distress, nor ever had an opportunity of shewing any such kindness to thee, that thou shouldst now distinguish us in such a manner, and speak so honourably of the service we have done thee.

And the king answering with renewed condescension from his exalted throne, *shall* not disdain to *say unto them*, I well know that ye abounded in such kind and compassionate actions to the necessitous and afflicted saints around

kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me, I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee?* or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?

38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee?*

39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, In as much

[d] *I was sick, and ye looked after me.*] This seems the exactest sense of ἐπισκέπτεσθαι με, which in general signifies to *take the oversight and care* of any thing that requires diligent inspection and attendance (compare Jam. i. 27. and *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 117.) and it strongly intimates that such an attendance on the poor in their illness is a very acceptable charity: and this is what many may have an opportunity of doing who have very little money to spare.

much as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

around you; and *verily I say unto you, In as much as ye did* [*it*] *unto one of the least* and poorest *of these my* dear *brethren*, who now stand with you in this happy company, *ye* in effect *did* [*it*] *to me*[e]: and I declare it in the face of all the world, That I take and reward it as if I had been relieved in person, and joyfully welcome you to that blessed world, where you shall be for ever reaping the harvest of these labours of love. SECT. clxvi. Mat. XXV. 40

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left-hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Then when his faithful servants are thus acquitted and honoured, *he shall* turn and *say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed* and detestable creatures, *into the* agonies of that *everlasting* and unquenchable *fire*, which was originally *prepared for the devil and his angels*[f], whose companions you must for ever be in the regions of horror and despair. 41

42 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink.

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

And ye cannot but know in your own consciences that ye well deserve it; *for I was hungry, and ye did not give me* so much as bread *to eat; I was thirsty, and ye did not give me* so much as water *to drink; I was* wandering among you as *a* poor helpless *stranger, and ye did not take me in* among your domestics and guests; I was *naked, and ye did not clothe me;* I was *sick, and in prison, and ye did not look after me,* or do any thing at all for my relief. 42 43

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or a thirst, or a stranger, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Then shall they also answer and say unto him[g], *Lord*, we are surprised at so strange a charge, and cannot apprehend ourselves liable to it; for *when did we* ever *see thee hungry or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not* to the best of our abilities *minister to thee?* If we had ever seen thee in distress, we would not have neglected to relieve thee; but we had never any opportunity of doing it. 44

And

[e] *Ye did it to me.*] That *alms-deeds* should be remembered with peculiar regard in the *day of judgment* was a notion that early prevailed among the Jews, as appears by the *Chaldee Paraphrase* on Eccles. ix. 7. which bears a remarkable resemblance to these words of Christ, and might perhaps be an imitation of them. See Mede's *Works*, p. 81.

[f] *Prepared for the devil and his angels.*] There is a remarkable difference between *our Lord's* expression *here* and in ver. 34. There *the kingdom* is said to have been *prepared for the righteous from the foundation of the world*; whereas here *the everlasting fire* is not said to have been *prepared for the wicked*, but *for the devil and his angels*. Compare Rom. ix. 22, 23.

[g] *Then shall they also answer*, &c.] Perhaps it may only intimate this shall be the language of their hearts, which Christ perceiving, will reply to it. I see no necessity for supposing they shall actually plead thus. Multitudes will no doubt remember they have often heard what *reply* will be made to such a plea: God grant that none who read it here may be in the number of those to whom it will be made!

[h] *Everlasting*

SECT. clxvi.

Mat. XXV. 45

And *then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you,* and declare it in the most solemn manner, That *inasmuch as ye did [it] not to one of the least of these* once necessitous, though now triumphant saints, who dwelt among you on earth, and needed your assistance, *ye did [it] not to me;* and I justly thought myself neglected and injured when you shut up the bowels of your compassion towards them.

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, In as much as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

46 *And* so, to conclude all, *these* miserable wretches, notwithstanding all the excuses they can urge, *shall go away into* a most dreadful state of *everlasting punishment; but the righteous,* through the abundant grace of God manifested by his Son, shall enter *into everlasting life* [h]: and thus the great scene shall close in the eternal happiness or misery of every human creature who has ever lived on the face of the earth.

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

IMPROVEMENT.

Mat. XXV. 31 32 33

LET us now behold, with an attentive eye and a solicitous heart, *the end of all the living;* that awful scene, in which the various dispensations of God to mankind shall terminate in the solemn day, *when the Son of man shall come in his glory,* and *sit on his* magnificent *throne. All nations* and people *shall be assembled before him,* and *we* must make up a part of the assembly. *The sheep* and the *goats* must then be *separated:* and, O my soul, amongst which wilt thou then be numbered? Is there an inquiry, is there a care, of greater, of equal, of comparable importance?

Let us view the *sentence* we must shortly hear, as *he* who will himself pronounce it has been pleased to give us a copy of it.—

41 Can we conceive any thing more dreadful than *that* which shall be passed on *those on the left hand;* To be driven from the presence of *Christ* as *accursed,* and to be consigned over to a devouring *fire!* and this not only to the tortures of a moment, or an hour (as in some painful executions that have been known here,) but to *everlasting fire,* yea, to fire *prepared for the devil and his angels,* where they will be perpetual companions, and perpetual tormentors! should not the thought that he is in danger, in hourly danger, of being sealed up under this sentence, awaken the most stupid sinner, and engage him eagerly to cry out, *What shall I do*

h *Everlasting punishment, — everlasting life.*] As the *original word* αιωνιον is the same in both places, I thought it proper to use the same word in the *translation* of both; and miserable are they that dare venture their souls on its signifying a *limited duration* in either.

do to be saved?—And *on whom* is this sentence passed? Let us attentively observe it! Not merely on the most gross and abandoned sinners, but on those who have lived in an habitual neglect of their duty: not merely on those who have ravaged and persecuted the saints (though surely *their furnace* will be *heated seven times hotter* than that of others), but even on those who have *neglected to relieve them.* SECT. CLXVI. Mat. XXV. 42, 43

On the other hand, let us seriously reflect what it will be to be owned by *Christ* before the assembled world; and to hear him saying with a sweet smile, and with a voice of harmony and love, *Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* How infinite is the love that prepared that kingdom for us before we had a being! how rich the blood that purchased it! how overflowing the grace that bestows it on such mean, such undeserving creatures! *Bless the Lord, O our souls,* in the prospect of it! *Let men curse,* O Lord, if *thou* wilt thus *bless;* (Psal. cix. 28.) Let them load our names with infamy if thou wilt adorn them with such glory: let all the kingdoms of the earth, and all the pomp of them, be despised and trampled under foot, when offered as an equivalent for this infinitely more glorious kingdom. 34

Let us attentively observe *the character* of those who are to receive it. They are the useful and benevolent souls: such as have *loved the Lord Jesus Christ,* not only in his name, and ordinances, and promises, but have loved him in his laws, and in *his people* too; and have known him in those humble forms in which he has been pleased, as it were *by proxy,* to appear among us. *I was hungry, and ye fed me; thirsty, and ye gave me drink,* &c.; for *in as much as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.* Amazing words! that the *meanest saint* should be owned by the *King of glory* as one of *his brethren!* Irresistible argument to those that do indeed believe these words, to stir them up to abound *in every good word and work!* Under this impression, methinks, instead of *hiding ourselves* from those who should be to us *as our own flesh* by virtue of our common union to him, we should not only hearken to their intreaties, but even *search them out* in those corners to which modest want may sometimes retire, and cast about in our thoughts how we may secure any happy opportunity of relieving some poor *saint, for their sakes,* and *for their Master's,* and even *for our own.* What if *Christ* came to us in person as a poor helpless *stranger?* What if we saw him *destitute of food* and *raiment,* or in want of any other necessaries of life? Should we not contend for it as an honour, which of us should *receive him into our houses,* which of us should *entertain him at our table,* which of us should even strip ourselves 35, 36 40

SECT. CLXVI.

of *our cloathing* to give it to him? And yet he tells us that he is in effect with us *in his poor members*; and we invent a thousand cold excuses for neglecting to assist him, and send our compassionate *Saviour* away empty. Is this the temper of a *Christian*? Is this the temper in which we should wish to be found at the judgment-day?

Ver. 40

44, 45 But *we know not Christ* in this disguise. Neither did these unhappy creatures *on the left-hand* know him: they are surprised to be told of such a thing; and yet are represented as perishing for it. Away therefore will all *those religious hopes* (vainly so called) which leave the heart hardened, and the hand contracted from good works! *If we shut up the bowels of compassion from our brethren, how dwelleth the love of God in us?* (1 John iii. 17.) Or to what doth the *love of Christ constrain us*, if it be not to the exercise of gratitude to him, and the offices of cheerful and active friendship to those whom he now owns as *his brethren*, and whom he will not be ashamed to call so in the midst of his highest triumph? *Blessed Jesus*, how munificent art thou! and what a fund of *charity* didst thou lay up in the very words which are now before us! In all ages since they were spoken, how many *hungry* hast thou *fed*, how many *naked* hast thou *clothed*, how many calamitous creatures hast thou *relieved* by them! May they be written deep in our hearts, that the joy with which we shall finally meet thee may be increased by the happy effect of this day's meditation!

SECT. CLXVII.

The Jewish rulers consult how they might take Christ, and Judas agrees with them to deliver him privately into their hands. Mat. XXVI. 1—5, 14—16. Mark XIV. 1, 2, 10, 11. Luke XXI. 37, *to the end.* XXII. 1—6.

LUKE XXI. 37.

SECT. CLXVII.

THUS our Lord ended his discourses on this subject on the third day of the week in which he suffered; *and* thus he was generally employed from the time of his public entry into Jerusalem to his last passover: *he was teaching by day in the temple. and at night he went out* of the city, *and lodged at the mount called* [*the mount*] *of Olives*, in the neighbourhood of which Bethany lay; in the retirement of which, particularly in the garden of Gethsemane, he often spent a considerable part of the night; being desirous to secure that only season of solitude, that he might prepare himself for his approaching suf-

Luke XXI. 37

LUKE XXI. 37.

AND in the daytime he was teaching in the temple, and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called *the mount* of Olives.

sufferings by a proper series of extraordinary devotion. And as soon as it was light, he returned to the city; *and all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, that they might* thus lay hold of every opportunity to *hear him;* and he was solicitous not to lose any time that might be improved for so profitable a purpose. SECT. CLXVII. Luke XXI. 38

38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

Now it may not be improper here to observe, that *the feast of unleavened bread, which was* commonly *called the passover, drew near, [and] was* celebrated within *two days after* our Lord had delivered the prophecies and admonitions so largely recorded above [a]. Luke XXII. 1

LUKE XXII. 1. Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the passover, [*and* was after two days. [MARK XIV. 1.]

And it came to pass, that *when Jesus had finished all these discourses,* and the appointed hour for his sufferings was now at hand, *he said to his disciples. Ye know that after two days the passover cometh; and* in the plainest terms I now assure you *the Son of man is* then to be *betrayed* to his inveterate enemies, that, according to what I have often told you (Mat. xvi. 21, and xx. 18, 19), he may be put into the hands of sinful men *to be crucified:* prepare yourselves therefore for that trying season, that you may not be hurried into any thing which you may afterwards have reason to repent. Mat. XXVI. 1, 2

MAT. XXVI. 1. And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these saying, he said unto his disciples,

2 Ye know that after two days is *the feast of* the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

Then that very evening *the chief priests* of every class, *and* others employed in distinguished services in the temple, together with *the scribes, and the* other *elders of the people,* who were members of the grand sanhedrim, *assembled together* not indeed in the temple, where they usually met, but *at the palace of the high-priest, who was* then *called Caiaphas;* (as was observed before, John xi. 40, p. 127.) *And* there *they* entered into a secret conspiracy, and *consulted how they might* privately *take Jesus by* some *artifice,* without giving an alarm to his friends, *and* might *put him to death* as soon as possible, which one way or other they were determined to do. *But they* had such an apprehension of his interest in the people, that some of them were rather for delaying it, and *said,* It will be more advisable to wait till after the passover, and 3, 4, 5

3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high-priest, who was called Caiaphas; [MARK XIV.—1.—LUKE XXI. 2.—]

4 And consulted [how] they might take Jesus by subtilty, [and put him to death.] [MARK XIV. — 1. LUKE XXII.—2.—]

5 But they said, Not on the feast-*day*, lest there be an uproar among the people: [LUKE

[a] *Two days after.*] I apprehend that the preceding discourses (from sect. cli.) were delivered on the *Tuesday* of the week in which he suffered; and he probably uttered the following words *that evening,* which was just *two days* before the *paschal lamb* was eaten.—I do not find that any of the transactions of the *Wednesday* are recorded besides the general account given above.

[b] *One*

SECT. CLXVII.

and *not* to attempt to seize him *at the feast*, while there is such a concourse in the city from all parts; *lest* the design that we have formed against him should be discovered, and, considering how popular he is, *there should be a tumult* raised *among the people*, either to rescue him from our hands, or to revenge his death. Such were the cautious sentiments of some among them; *for they feared the people:* but others pushed the matter on with greater forwardness and zeal, and were by no means for deferring it; to which at length the rest agreed, upon finding a more favourable opportunity than they expected, offering itself through the treachery of Judas.

[LUKE, for they feared the people.] MARK XIV. 2. LUKE XXII. —2.]

Mat. XXVI. 5

Luke XXII. 3.

For *then*, just at that very juncture of time, *Satan*, by Divine permission, *entered into Judas, who was also called Iscariot, and was* (as we observed before) *one of the number of the twelve* apostles who were chosen by our Lord from the rest of his disciples to the most honourable trust as well as the most endearing intimacy[b]: and as this malignant spirit had before suggested to him the horrid design of betraying his Master, he now strongly impressed his mind that during his retirement he might easily find a convenient time for executing it, and might be sure of being well rewarded for it by the rulers of the Jews. *And*, under this impression, *he* immediately *went away* from Christ and his company to the house of Caiaphas, whom he knew to be a most inveterate enemy to his Master; *and* having found means of introducing himself, and communicating his general design, he *conversed with the chief priests and captains* of the temple, who were not yet gone away, and deliberated *how he might* with the greatest convenience and security *betray him unto them.*

LUKE XXII. 3. Then entered Satan into Judas, sirnamed Iscariot, being [one] of the number of the twelve: [MAT. XXVI. 14—MARK XIV. 10.—]

4

4 And he went his way and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them: [MAT. XXVI. —14. MARK XIV.— 10.]

Mat. XXVI. 15

And as the sordid wretch proposed it with a covetous view, before he would come to any agreement with them, *he said*, without the least appearance of shame or remorse, *What are you willing to give me, and I will* undertake to *deliver him to you* at a time and place in which you may effectually secure him without the danger of giving any alarm to the people?

MAT. XXVI. 15. —And said *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?

And

[b] *One of the number of the twelve*, &c.] This was a circumstance of such high aggravation, that it is observable, each of the *evangelists* hath marked it out in this view. Compare with these places John vi. 71. Vol. VI. p. 437.

[c] *Thirty*

SECT. clxvii.

MARK XIV. 11.—And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. [And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.] [MAT. XXVI.—15. LUKE XXII. 5.]

And when they heard his proposal, they thought [*it*] very practicable; and *they were glad* of so unexpected an offer from one of his own disciples to facilitate their measures; *and* therefore readily *promised* in general *to give him* a sum of *money* as a reward for that service; *and* at last *they* expressly *agreed with him for thirty pieces of silver*[c], which was the price to be paid for a slave who had been slain (see Exod. xxi. 32): and as they proposed it to express their contempt of Jesus, so God permitted Judas, covetous as he was, to acquiesce in that mean and trifling sum (though he might easily have raised it higher), that thus the prophecy might be fulfilled in which it had been particularly specified. (See Zech. xi. 12, 13.)

Mark XIV. 11.

LUKE XXII. 6. And he promised, and [from that time] sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude. [MAT. XXVI. 16. MARK XIV.—11.]

And he promised to take a punctual care in the affair: *and* accordingly *from that time* he diligently *sought* a proper *opportunity to betray him unto them*, that they might come upon him privately, and apprehend him *in the absence of the multitude:* nor was it long before this happened, as we shall quickly relate in its place.

Luke XXII. 6

IMPROVEMENT.

WE see with what unremitting vigour the great *Author and Finisher of our faith* pressed forward *towards the mark*, and how he quickened his pace, as he *saw the day approaching;* spending in devotion the greatest part of *the night*, which succeeded to his most laborious days, and resuming his work *early in the morning!* How much happier were *his disciples* in these early lectures than the slumbers of the morning could have made them on their beds! Let us not scruple to deny ourselves the indulgence of unnecessary sleep, that we may come *morning after morning* to place ourselves at his feet, and lose no opportunity of receiving the instructions of his word, and seeking those of his Spirit.

Luke xxi. 37, 38

But while his gracious heart was thus intent on doing good, *the chief priests and rulers of the people* were no less intent on mischief and murder. They *took counsel together how they might put him to death:* They set upon his head *the price of a slave*, and find *an apostle* base enough to accept it. Blush, *O ye heavens*, to have been

Mat. xxvi. 3, 4, 14, 15

[c] *Thirty pieces of silver.*] A slave was rated by the law at *thirty shekels of silver*, which, if we reckon them at *half a crown* (which is supposed to have been about their real value), amounted to no more than *three pounds fifteen shillings* of our money; *a goodly price that he was prized at of them.* Zech. xi. 13.

SECT. CLXVII.

been witness to this; and be ashamed, *O earth*, to have supported so infamous a creature! Yet this was the man who but a few days before was the foremost to appear as an *advocate for the poor*, and to censure the pious zeal of *Mary*, which *our Lord* vindicated and applauded (John xii. 4—8. p. 151, 152). Let the fatal fruits of his covetous disposition, instigated by *Satan*, be marked with abhorrence and terror; and if we see this base principle harboured in the breasts of those who call themselves the *disciples and ministers of Christ*, let us not wonder if by God's righteous judgment they are given up to those excesses of it which bring upon them lasting infamy and endless perdition.

Luke xxii. 3, 4, 6

SECT. CLXVIII.

Christ, having directed his disciples where to prepare the passover for him, comes to Jerusalem for the last time before his death, and sits down with them to the celebration of it. Mat. XXVI. 17—20. Mark XIV. 12—17. Luke XXII. 7—18. John XIII. 1.

LUKE XXII. 7.

SECT. CLXVIII.

Luke XXII. 7.

NOW after this infamous bargain which Judas made with the chief priests to betray into their hands his innocent and Divine Master, on the fifth day of the week, before the evening when *the first day of unleavened bread came*[a], *in which*, according to the precept of the law, which had expressly limited the time of it, *the passover must be killed*, or the pascal lamb be slain, in commemoration of the Israelites being preserved from the destroying angel, and delivered out of Egypt, Jesus determined to keep
8 the passover with his disciples. *And*, that he might in a due manner celebrate it with them, *he sent two of his disciples, Peter and John*, from the place where he had spent the night before in retirement with them, *and said, Go* to Jerusalem, *and prepare the passover for us, that we may* once more *eat* [*it*] together.

LUKE XXII. 7.

THEN came the [first] day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. [MAT. XXVI. 17.—MARK XIV. 12.—]

8 And he sent [two of his disciples], Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. [MARK XIV. 13.—]

And

[a] *The first day of unleavened bread came.*] There is no room to question that the time when Christ sent his disciples to *prepare the passover* was on the *Thursday* of the week in which he suffered; and though *the first day of unleavened bread*, most strictly so called, was the *fifteenth day of Nisan*, and began with the *evening* that the passover was eaten, yet it is not improbable that the *evangelists* might sometimes speak according to the usual way of reckoning *days* among other nations; and so, as the use of *leaven* among them was to cease by *sun-set* at farthest, and they were obliged to eat their *supper*, which was the chief meal, with *unleavened cakes*, it might naturally enough be called by this name.

SECT. clxviii.

Luke XXII. 9.

9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we [MARK, go and] prepare [for thee to eat the passover?] [MAT. XXVI.—17. MARK XIV.—12.]

10 And he said unto them, [Go into the city to such a man, *and*] behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. [MAT. XXVI. 18.—MARK XIV.—13.]

11 And [MARK, wheresoever he shall go in] ye shall say unto the good man of the house, The Master saith unto thee, [My time is at hand, I will keep the passover at thy house,] where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? [MAT. XXVI.—18. MARK XIV. 14.]

12 And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished [and prepared:] there make ready [for us]. [MARK XIV. 15.]

And they said unto him, Lord, we are ready to perform the charge, and that we may be under no uncertainty as to the place, only desire thou wouldst particularly tell us, *Where*, or at what house *wilt thou have us go and prepare for thy eating the passover* with us.

And he said unto them, I will give you a sign, 10 which shall put the matter out of doubt: *Go* directly *into the city to such a one* as I will point out to you: [*and*] *behold, as soon as* ever *you are entered into the city, a man will meet you* in the street *carrying a pitcher of water* in his hand; *follow him* immediately *into the house where he enters;* for I know it will be a place very fit for our accommodation[b]. *And wheresoever he* 11 *goes in, you shall say to the master of the family*, We are come to thee with a message from Jesus *the Teacher;* and he *says to thee* by us, *my time is* now very *near*[c], and before I make my last remove *I will celebrate the passover at thy house: where* then *is the dining-room?* or what convenient chamber hast thou to spare, *where I may* come and *eat the passover with my disciples*, and be secure from the interruption of any other company? *And* upon this *he will* take you up 12 stairs, and *shew you a large upper room*, which will conveniently hold us all; and you will find it *furnished* with all proper utensils, *and prepared* by all necessary circumstances of purification of every kind, so as to be, on the whole, in very good order: *there* provide the unleavened bread, the lamb, and the bitter herbs, and *make* all things *ready for us* against the time of our coming; for we shall be able to find the house without any direction from you[d].

And

b *A man will meet you*, &c.] As Samuel, having anointed Saul, for the confirmation of his faith gave him several *predictions* relating to some very contingent occurrences he was to meet with in his journey (see 1 Sam. x. 2—7), so *our Lord* seems by these *predictions* to have intended the same with regard to *his disciples*, and also to give them a most important hint that he foresaw all the particular circumstances which were to befal him at Jerusalem when he went up thither for the next and last time before his sufferings.—The sending them to Jerusalem in this manner seems to intimate, that he did not go thither himself that morning so that it is very probable he spent most of the day in retirement for meditation and prayer.

c *My time is near.*] Every body knew that *the time* for eating the *passover* was *near;* for that these words must be supposed to have a further view. And I am therefore ready to believe that the owner of this house, to whom *our Lord* sent this message by the name of *the teacher*, might be a person who (though unknown to Peter and John) was in his heart at least *a disciple of Christ;* and *our Lord* might give this intimation, that it was to be a time of more than ordinary importance to him, that it might be some secret support to this man's faith under that violent shock it was soon to receive by his approaching sufferings.

d We shall be able to find the house, &c.] The same *prophetic gift* which enabled

SECT. clxviii.

† Mat. XIV. 16

And after he had given these particular instructions to *his* two *disciples*, they *went out* from thence, *and came into the city, and found* the man carrying the water, whom they followed into a house, where there was, just *as he had said to them*, a commodious dining-room at liberty, and well furnished: *and* as the master of the house was free to let them have it, *they did as Jesus had appointed them, and made the passover ready* against the time when he should come to eat it.

MARK XIV. 16. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they [did as Jesus had appointed them, and] made ready the passover. [MATT. XXVI. 19. LUKE XXII. 13.]

17 *And in the evening, when the* proper *hour* for eating the passover *was come, he came* directly to the house where his messengers were, *and sat down* to the table *with* all *the twelve apostles* around him, to taste (according to the usage of those days) the unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs, before the lamb was served up[c].

17 And in the evening [LUKE, when the hour was come], he cometh, [*and* sat down] with the twelve [LUKE, apostles.] [MATT. XXVI. 20. LUKE XXII. 14.]

John XIII. 1

Now it is here to be observed, that *before* he began to eat *the feast of the passover, as Jesus knew that his hour was come when he should depart from this* calamitous *world*, in which he had sojourned for a while, to return *to the* bosom of the *Father* in which he originally dwelt, he was solicitous to order every circumstance of his conduct in this last intercourse with his disciples, so as might most effectually promote their edification and comfort, and make it clearly manifest that *having* always tenderly *loved his own that were in the world, he loved them* in the most perfect

JOHN XIII. 1. Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

bled Christ to predict these circumstances would, no doubt, guide him thither; and it is a beautiful modesty in the *sacred historian* only to hint obliquely at it: but I apprehend it the part of a *paraphrast* to set these particulars in a fuller and stronger light.

c To taste the unleavened bread, &c.] I must here entreat my reader, if he has an opportunity, to consult *Ainsworth's* excellent *Note* on Exod. xii. 8. where he has collected from authentic *Jewish writers* the best account I have any where seen in so little room of the various *ceremonies* with which *the passover* was eaten, by which the subsequent story is greatly illustrated. Among others, the following circumstances should be recollected:—That the master of the family began the feast with *a cup of wine*, which, having solemnly *blessed*, that is, having adored the name of God over it, he *divided* among the guests (Luke xxii. 17), and afterwards washed his hands:—Then the supper began with the *unleavened bread and bitter herbs*, which, when the master and the rest of the company had tasted, one of the younger persons present, generally a child, asked the reason of what was peculiar in that feast (according to Exod. xii. 26), which introduced the *haggadah*, that is, *the shewing forth*, or declaration of it; (in allusion to which we read of *shewing forth the Lord's death*, 1 Cor. xi. 26.)—Then the master rose up and took another *cup*, and washed his hands again, before *the lamb* was tasted: and in this interval, I suppose, Christ also *washed the feet* of his disciples:—Then, after *eating the passover*, followed another *cup*, which, after having delivered to each a piece of bread, was the *sacramental cup* at this supper:—Then, after some pious and friendly discourse, the whole family, after having drank at least a *fourth cup*, sang some *psalms* of praise: and so the solemnity ended.—Agreeable to this is the account given in *the Religious Ceremonies of all Nations*, Vol. I. p. 215—217.

fect manner, even to *to the end* of his life[t], and would decline nothing which might be for their advantage. SECT. CLXVIII.

Luke XXII. 15. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer,

Luke XXII. 15

And, to express the fervency and strength of this affection, *he said to them*, as they sat together, before supper was brought in, I assure you that *I have most earnestly desired to eat this passover with you*, though I know it will be the last I shall celebrate with you, and we shall rise from it but a few hours *before I* am to *suffer* from mine enemies the most cruel insults, and torments, which shall end in my death: yet such is my love to my people, and such my desire to glorify my heavenly Father, that no passover was ever so welcome to me as this: *For* now I see the days of my humiliation almost finished; and *I say unto you, That* after this *I will not* celebrate any other passover with you, nor *eat of it any more, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God*, or till the institutions of the gospel shall have perfected those of the law, and the ordinances of both are superseded by the more perfect enjoyments of the heavenly world.

16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

16

17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide *it* among yourselves,

17

And then, *having received the cup*, with which it was usual for them to begin the feast, *he gave thanks* to God for the redemption of Israel, in commemoration of which the passover was instituted, and for giving them this opportunity of celebrating this holy banquet together; *and* then *said, Take this* cup, and let it go round, *and divide* [*it*] *among yourselves*, and bless the God of your fathers. And see that you do it with a devotion suitable to the distinguished solemnity which you have now before you: *for I say unto you, That* after what passes this evening, *I will not drink* any more with you *of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God come*, and that complete and spiritual redemption, which is typified by this ordinance, shall be fulfilled and perfected.

18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

18

IMPROVE-

[t] *He loved them to the end.*] I shall in the *next section* hint at my reasons for agreeing with those *critics* who place the story of *Christ's washing his disciples' feet* at the beginning of the *paschal supper*, rather than a night or two before.—At present, I would only observe, that *this verse* seems intended by John to introduce, not merely the story which immediately follows it, but the whole account of Christ's behaviour to his friends in these last scenes of his life; and therefore as he prefixes it to the first circumstance that he has mentioned of this *passover*, I apprehend it proper to begin the whole story with it; especially since the words which I have placed next after it are full of that *love* which he expressed to them even to the last.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. CLXVIII. WE may well assure ourselves, that the same Divine penetration and prophetic discernment which enabled the blessed *Jesus* thus circumstantially to *foretell* to his disciples those most *contingent occurrences* which were to determine *the place* where they should *prepare the passover*, would also open to him a prospect of all that was to follow. All the scenes that were to be passed through on this fatal night, and the succeeding black and bloody day, were, no doubt, attentively viewed: the *agony* of the *garden*, the traiterous *kiss* of *Judas*, the cowardly *flight* of all the other *apostles*, the *insults* of his seemly victorious and successful *enemies*, the clamorous *accusations*, the insolent *buffetings*, the *scourges*, the *thorns*, the *nails*, the *cross* and all that he was to endure upon it from the hand of God and men. Yet behold, with all these in his view, he goes on with a holy alacrity, and this *sun of righteousness, rejoiceth as a champion to run his race!* (Psal. xix. 5.) Yea, when he is sitting down to the *paschal supper* (though therein was exhibited, in a most lively emblem, the bitterness of his own sufferings,) he utters these gracious and emphatical Words, *With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.*

Luke xxii. 10--13

15

John xiii. 1. So justly might it be said of him, as we see it is, that *having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them to the end.* O blessed *Jesus*, may the ardour, the courage, and the permanency of our *love to thee*, bear at least some little proportion to that wherewith thou hast condescended to *love us!* May we long, from time to time, to celebrate with thee that *Christian passover* which thou hast ordained to succeed the *Jewish*, as the memorial of thy sacrifice! Yea, may we long for the last solemnity of this kind, which will ere long come, after which we *shall no more drink* with thee *of the fruit of the vine, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God!* In the mean time may we be cheered with *thy love*, which is indeed far *better than wine*, (Cant. i. 3.) and, thus suppported with those reviving cordials which thy gospel administers, may we *keep ourselves in the love of God, and in the patient expectation of thy final*, most glorious, and welcome *appearance!* (2 Thess. iii. 5. and Jude, ver. 21.)

Luke xxii. 16, 18

SECT.

SECT. CLXIX.

Christ rebukes the ambition which his disciples most unseasonably expressed as they were sitting down to supper, by washing their feet, and adding several excellent admonitions to the exercise of humility, immediately before the eating of the paschal lamb. Luke XXII. 24—27. John XIII. 2—3—17.

JOHN XIII. 2.— AND supper being ended,—

JOHN XIII. 2.—

NOW when our Lord had thus sate down to eat the passover with his disciples (as was said before,) *supper being come*, [a] and the antepast or introduction to it having been dispatched, as above: Just in the interval between that and the serving up the paschal lamb, *there was* a most unseasonable *contention among them* [b], as

SECT. CLXIX.

John XIII. 2.

LUKE XXII. 24.— There was also a strife among them, which of them

Luke XXII. 24

a *Supper being come.*] The reasons brought by Bishop *Kidder* (in his *Demonstration of the Messiah*, part iii. chap. 3, p. 60, 61,) by Dr. *Lightfoot* (*Hor. Heb.* on Mat. xxvi. 6,) and since by Dr. *Whitby* (in his *notes* on this place,) to prove that *this supper* was not the *passover*, but another supper at Bethany a night or two before, I have briefly obviated in the *paraphrase* or *notes* on the places on which they are grounded; and therefore cannot think it material to trouble the reader with a particular detail of them. The chief reasons which determine me to the contrary opinion (besides some others, of which a good summary is given in Dr. *Guyse's* valuable *Note* on this place) are these: such a disposition of the story best suits several of the circumstances of the *paschal supper*, (particularly the *contention* about *superiority*, and the *inquiry* about Judas, both which must, on the other hypothesis, have been superseded;) and the propriety of it is especially evinced from John xiii. 38. where *our Lord* says to Peter, *The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice*; which must be spoken the very *night Jesus was betrayed*, and yet is so connected with this story of *washing the disciples' feet* by ver. 21. and ver. 31. that they cannot without great violence be separated: and it is certain, John xiii. 1. will have a peculiar energy according to this plan; which therefore most *critics* have followed.—The reader will observe here that I have rendered δειπνου γινομενου *supper being come*, which is the sense in which the word is often used elsewhere: thus John xxi. 4. πρωιας γινομενης is *when morning was come*; Acts xii. 18. xvi. 35. ημερας γινομενης, *when day was come*; and Acts xxi. 50. σιγης γινομενης *when silence was made*; in all which places, and in many more that might easily be collected from the *Greek* writers, it would be absurd to translate the word *ended*. Nay, Luke iv. 42. γινομενης ημερας, signifies *when the day was coming on*. (Compare Mark i. 35. *note* f, Vol. VI. p. 196.) It is indeed an ambiguous term; but the rendering above is here to be preferred, (1.) Because it was much more natural to *wash the feet* of guests *before* than after supper. (2.) Because it is expressly said, in ver. 1. to have been done *before the passover*, which, if the preceding reason be admitted, determines the point. (3.) Because part of the discourse, which John mentions as happening *after the feet were washed*, is mentioned by the other *evangelists* as passing *at supper*; nay, John himself, when he speaks, in ver. 26. of *Christ's dipping the sop, and giving it to Judas* after this, plainly shews that *supper was not ended*.—As the latter part of this 2d verse comes in by way of *parenthesis*, I have transposed that clause, and inserted it afterwards in ver. 21. to introduce what relates to Judas in the *next section*; a freedom which will, I hope, be easily excused.

b *There was a contention among them.*] If the reasoning above be allowed, we must certainly transpose Luke's account of this *contention* about *superiority*; for none can imagine it should follow immediately after Christ had been giving them so affecting a lesson of *humility*. But Luke seems less exact in the order of *this story* than other *evangelists*; and particularly relates what passed concerning the person that was

SECT. CLXIX.

as they sat at table with Jesus, *which of them should be accounted the greatest* in that kingdom of which he had been speaking, and which they interpreted of a temporal dominion that should succeed his approaching sufferings. (Compare Mark ix. 34, and Luke ix. 46, Vol. VI. p. 486.)

them should be accounted the greatest.

Luke xxii. 24

John xiii. 3.

[*And*] upon this, *though Jesus knew that the Father*, by the sure engagements of an immutable covenant, *had given* the government of *all things into his hands*, and was just going actually to invest him with all power both in heaven and upon earth; *and that, as he came forth from God* as his Messenger to men, so *he was returning to God* again; yet, conscious as he was of so great a dignity, he was nevertheless willing to give his disciples an example of the deepest humility in this his last interview with them before his passion: With this design, and in order to shame them out of that ambitious contention which he observed among them, in a more forcible manner than any words alone could do, *he riseth from supper* [c]; *and* whereas it was only usual for the head of the family at such a time to wash his own hands, he *lays aside his* upper-*garments, and taking a towel, tied it round him* like a kind of apron; *And then pouring water into a* large *ewer*, or sort of cistern commonly used on these occasions, *he began* himself *to wash the feet of* [*his*] *disciples, and to wipe* [*them,*] after they were thus washed *with* the long ends of *the linen cloth with which he was girded*, which hung down to his feet.

JOHN XIII. 3. [*And*] Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God.

4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girded himself.

5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.

Then when he had done with those who sat nearest to him, *he comes to Simon Peter*; and, offering to do the like for him, [*Peter*] was so affected

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

was to betray him *after the Eucharist*, though both Matthew and Mark place it *before*.

[c] *He riseth from supper.*] As it is here asserted, that *Christ rose from supper*, we must allow, that, in some sense, *supper was begun*, that is, as I suppose, the *antepast* had been taken, which is mentioned by the *Jews* as preceding the *Paschal Lamb*: (See *Ainsworth's note* quoted above, *note* c, p. 274.) They tell us, that it was then usual for the master of the family to *wash his hands*: and if I am rightly informed, the *Jews* continue the custom still.—This seems a more natural manner of explaining the clause before us, than to suppose with *Grotius* or *Vossius*, (*Harm. Evang.* lib. i. cap. 14. § 1.) or Dr. *Edwards*, (*Exercit.* on Luke xxii. 21.) that *after the paschal lamb* they eat *another* distinct *supper*; and that this *washing* happened in the interval between them. Though *Vossius* is pleased to call this a *very little lamb* (*unus Agniculus,*) I cannot but think (especially considering how early the *ewes* yean in Judea) that it might be big enough plentifully to sup *thirteen* people; and as all which remained uneaten till morning was to be burnt, (Exod. xii. 10.) one cannot suppose that *our Lord* would be inclined to multiply dishes on this occasion, especially as the former part of the night was to be spent in watching and prayer.

[d] *He*

affected at his condescending to perform such a mean office, that he *says to him, Lord dost thou* go about to *wash my feet?* It is a thousand times fitter that I should wash thine; nor can I bear to see thee demean thyself thus. *Jesus answered and said to him, Thou knowest not now* the design of *what I am doing, but thou shalt know hereafter;* and as I shall presently explain the meaning of this action, so the time will quickly come when many other things in mine undertaking and conduct, much more mysterious than this, shall be cleared up to thee. Yet still *Peter* refused, and *said to him,* with more warmth than before, Lord, whatever be the intent of the action, I cannot suffer it by any means, and am determined *thou shalt never wash my feet.* But *Jesus answered him,* Alas, Peter, that was rashly spoken; for there is a sense in which, *if I do not wash thee, thou hast no portion with me;* intimating thereby, that if he were not cleansed from sin by his blood and Spirit, he could never partake of the happiness of his people; and that, in the mean time, it became him to submit in this instance to his direction. Upon which, *Simon Peter,* struck with so awful an admonition, immediately *says to him,* with that eager affection so natural to his temper, *Lord,* if this washing is to be a token of my interest in thee, I most gladly acquiesce in it, and am heartily desirous that thou shouldst wash, *not my feet only, but also my hands and my head* too; for I desire that all my intellectual and all my executive powers may be sanctified by thy grace, and be entirely devoted to thy service.

SECT. CLXIX.

John XIII. 7.

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head.

10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed, needeth not, save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

Then *Jesus,* willing to lay hold on a hint which gave him an opportunity of pursuing so useful a thought, *says further to him, He that* is washed already, or that *has* just *been bathing*[d], *needs only to wash his feet,* which may indeed easily be soiled by the shortest walk, *and* when that is done, he *is entirely clean;* as if he should have said, The truly good man needs not that deep repentance and universal change which is abso-

d *He that has been bathing.*] This rendering of the word λελουμενος is confirmed by *Elsner (Observ.* Vol. I. p. 337, 338), and gives as it were a compendious *paraphrase* upon it. Clarius has well observed that, as the αποδυτηριον, or room in which they dressed themselves after bathing, was different from that in which they bathed, *the feet* might be so soiled in walking from one to the other as to make it necessary immediately to wash them again.

SECT. CLXIX.

absolutely necessary to others though he should, by renewed acts of penitence and faith, be cleansing himself from smaller pollutions, which
John XIII. 10. are in some degree inseparable from the infirmity of human nature: *and*, in this sense, I know that *you*, my apostles, *are clean; but* vet
11 I must add, You are *not all* so. *For* as he was acquainted with the secret dispositions of their hearts, so *he knew who would betray him* (compare John vi. 64, Vol. VI. p. 436); and *therefore he said, You are not all clean*[e], because he knew the heart of Judas was polluted with reigning sin, and was so far enslaved under the power of the devil as to have consented to the perpetration of the vilest wickedness.

11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

12 *When therefore he had* thus *washed their feet, and had taken his* upper-*garments*, and put them on, *he sat down* at the table *again, and said to them, Do you know* the meaning and design of *what I have* now *been doing to you* in the form of
Luke XXII. 25 a servant? *And*, to explain the matter, *he said to them*, I must again remind you of what I formerly told you, but what you seem so ready to forget (see Mat. xx. 25, 26, and Mark x. 42, 43, p. 135), *The kings of the Gentiles* do indeed *lord it over them; and they that exercise* the most magisterial and arbitrary *authority upon them have* a set of flatterers about them who encourage them in it, as an instance of true greatness of mind, and give them *the* vain *title of* grand
26 *benefactors* to nations and men[f]. *But you*, my disciples, [*shall*] *not* [*do*] *thus;* for you are to shew yourselves the friends of the world, not by governing, but by serving: be not ambitious therefore in contending for superiority, *but let him who is eldest among you be as* humble and obliging as if he were *the youngest* and most dependent

12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

LUKE XXII. 25. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them, are called benefactors.

26 But ye *shall* not *be* so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

[e] *You are not all clean.*] Some have observed that Judas did not decline the honour of having *his feet washed* by Christ, though Peter did; and have considered it as an instance of his pride. But if the discourse between Christ and Peter happened before he came to Judas, it had been indecent for Judas to renew an objection which had just been thus overruled: and if Christ came to Judas before Peter, he might be unwilling to be the first to dispute the point, lest Christ should confound him, by inquiring whether he declined it from a consciousness of any peculiar unworthiness. Guilt naturally suggests such suspicions and precautions.

[f] *Have the title of benefactors.*] It is indeed possible that *our Lord* may here refer to the title of εὐεργέται, given to some of the Ptolemies and Seleucidæ, or to the ambiguity of the *Hebrew* word נְדִיבִים, which (as Beza has observed) signifies both *princes* and *benefactors:* but the general sense given in the *paraphrase* seems to me much more probable, especially on comparing it with the *Syriac version*, where there is no such ambiguity, though one would most of all have expected it.

[h] *Who*

pendent of all[g]; *and he that presides* over the rest in any office of peculiar trust and influence, [*let him be*] as humble and condescending *as a servant.* Of this I have now been giving you an instance, which surely you cannot quickly forget: *for which* of the two *is* naturally accounted *greater* by a stranger who happens to come in, *he that sits at the table, or he that* stands and *waits* upon the guests? *Is* it *not* evident that it must be *he that sits at the table? But I am among you as one that waits* on the rest; and you have just now seen me putting on the form of a servant, and performing to you while you sat at the table one of the lowest offices of menial attendants[h], in the very garb and posture in which any of the least of them could appear. *You call me* indeed your *Teacher and Lord; and* therein *you say well; for* [*so*] *I am,* and such authority have I received of my Father. *If there-fore I,* who am [*your*] *Lord* and Master, *and* whom you know to be a divinely inspired *Teacher,* have condescended to so mean an office, and *have* thus *washed your feet,* and in all other instances have shewn my readiness in love to serve you, surely *you also ought to wash one another's feet,* and should be ready to submit to all the humblest offices of mutual friendship. *For I have* in this instance *given you an example, that as I have done to you, you also should do* on all proper occasions to one another[i]. And to engage you to the like humanity, *Verily, verily, I say unto you,* as I have formerly said (Luke vi. 40, and Mat. x. 24, Vol. VI. p. 396), *The servant*

SECT. CIXIX.

Luke XXII. 27

27 For whether *is* greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? *is* not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

John XIII. 13.

JOHN XIII. 13. Ye call me Master, and Lord: and ye say well; for *so* I am.

14

14 If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15

15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

16

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than

[g] *Who is the eldest among you,* &c.] As μειζων is here opposed to νεωτερος, *the youngest,* I render it *eldest,* as it is rendered Rom. ix. 12. See Gen. xxv. 23; 1 Sam. xvii. 14, *Septuag.* and compare 1 Kings ii. 22.

[h] Performing one of the lowest offices, &c.] This was so to a *proverb.* See 1 Sam. xxv. 41, and *Grotius, in loc.*—Dr. *Evans* well observes. *Christian Temper,* Vol. I. p 81) that *our Lord* chose this kind office, though not absolutely necessary in itself, more strongly to impress the minds of his disciples, and to shew that they ought to regard, not only the necessary preservation, but the mutual comfort of each other.

[i] *I have given you an example,* &c.] Some have understood these words as ordaining this to be *a continued rite* among Christians; and *Barclay* insists in his *Apology* (p. 467—470) that this ceremony of *washing the feet* has as much to recommend it for a standing ordinance of the gospel as either *baptism* or the *breaking of bread.* But though some anciently conceived the practice of it to be thus enjoined (see Dr. *Cave's Primitive Christianity,* book ii. chap. 14), and the *Moravian churches* still retain it; yet as no such *rite* as this has ever generally prevailed in the Christian world, and as in many places and circumstances it would be an inconvenience rather than a kindness to do it for our friends, I cannot think these words of *our Lord,* so plainly capable of another sense, are to be interpreted with so much strictness. See *Itigii Dissert. de Pedilavio,* &c.—Into what a farce this is turned at Rome on some occasions may be seen in *the Religious Ceremonies of all Nations,* Vol. I. p. 417.

SECT. CLXIX.

vant is not greater than his Lord, nor is *the messenger greater than he that sent him;* it will therefore very ill become you to disdain any thing which I have not disdained. These are plain instructions, but remember they are capable of being improved to the noblest practical purposes; and *if* indeed *you know these things*, and form a right conception of them, *you are happy if you practise them:* for nothing will conduce more to your honour and comfort than an obedient regard to my instructions and example, especially in all the instances of humility and condescension; but if you neglect to act agreeably to them, your seeing them, and hearing them, will be worse than in vain.

than his Lord, neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

John XII. 17.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT a mournful reflection is it that corrupt nature should still prevail so far, even in the hearts of such pious men as the *apostles* in the main were, that after so long a converse with *Christ* they should still be so unlike him, and bring their eager *contentions about superiority*, in a state of temporal grandeur they were never to see, into the last hours they spent with their Master, and even to one of the most holy and solemn *ordinances* of religion! Such are the vain dreams of *ambition*, and with such empty shadows does it amuse the deluded mind.

Luke xxii. 24.

But let us turn our eyes to him whom we justly *call* our *Teacher* and our *Lord;* for surely, if any thing can effect a cure, it must be actions and words like these. The great *Heir of all things*, invested with universal dominion, and just *returning to his heavenly Father* to undertake the administration of it: in what a *habit*, in what an *attitude*, do we see him! Whom would a stranger have taken for the *lowest* of the company, but him who was *high* over all created nature? Blessed *Jesus*, it was not so much any personal attachment to these thy servants, as a regard to the edification of thy whole church, which engaged thee to this astonishing action: that all thy *ministers*, that all thy *people*, in conformity to *thy example*, might learn a readiness to *serve each other* in love!

John xiii. 13, 14 3 4, 5 15

But why are we so slow to receive this lesson? And why is our practice often so contrary to it? Surely to cleanse us from these dregs of pride and carnality we need in a spiritual sense to be *washed* by him. Let us gladly submit to that *washing*, if we desire to secure *any part in him*. Which of us in this view may not see reason to cry out with *Peter*, *Lord, not* our *feet only, but also* our *hands and* our *head?* May our whole nature be thus purified!

8 9

fied! and, warmly emulous of conforming to so bright an *example*, may we ever be maintaining a watchfulness over our own spirits; correcting the first appearances of irregularity, and washing away every lightest stain which our *feet* may contract in this various journey! So shall we be *great* in the sight and favour of our Master; and, numbering ourselves among the *least* of his *servants*, shall be distinguished by peculiar honours, in proportion to the degree in which we think ourselves most unworthy of them. SECT. CLXIX. Luke xxii. 26

SECT. CLXX.

Christ, while they are eating the paschal lamb, declares that one of his apostles should betray him, and at length marks out Judas as the person, who upon this retires with a resentment which confirmed him in that fatal purpose. Mat. XXVI. 21—25. Mark XIV. 18—21. Luke XXII. 21—23, 28—30. John XIII.—2, 18—30.

Luke XXII. 28.

Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations:

Luke XXII. 28.

THEN Jesus went on, as he was eating the passover, to instruct, admonish, and comfort his disciples, by a series of most wise and pious discourse; and said, Depend upon it, you will find that humble and benevolent temper which I have recommended to you the way to the highest honours, if you have patience to wait the proper time; for as *ye are they who have continued* faithfully and affectionately *with me in* all *my trials* and afflictions: So by a sacred and inviolable covenant *I appoint unto you a kingdom*[a], and solemnly engage myself to bestow it upon you, *even as my Father has appointed* a kingdom *unto me*, and is quickly about to raise me to it. Now the exalted honours which I shall there receive are incomparably beyond SECT. CLXX. Luke XXII. 28

29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me:

30 That ye may eat and

a *I appoint unto you a kingdom.*] It is well known that the word διατιθεσθαι properly signifies *to covenant*, or to *bestow in virtue of a covenant*; and therefore the *last clause* of this *verse* may probably refer to what *divines* commonly call *the covenant of redemption*, to which there are so many references in scripture, and concerning the reality of which we could have no doubt if the references were not so express; considering, on the one hand, the great importance of that undertaking of *our Lord's* to which it refers; and, on the other, the plain declarations of those *prophecies* which his Spirit suggested, and the confidence with which he has promised those *blessings* which, as Mediator, it impowers him to bestow. It is therefore astonishing that any should treat it as the creature of a systematic brain.—For the engagements in it on Christ's part, see Psal. xl. 6—9. Heb. x. 6—9. Isa. lxi. 1—3. Luke iv. 18, 19. Is. l. 5, 6. And for those on the part of *the Father*, see Heb. x. 5. Isa. xi. 2, 3. l. 8, 9. lii. 13, 15. liii. 10—12. lv. 4, 5. xlix. 1—10. Luke ii 31, 32. xxii. 29. 2 Cor. vi. 2. Rev. vii. 16, 17.

SECT. CLXX.

yond those about which you seem so solicitous; let me therefore awaken a nobler ambition in your minds, while I assure you *that you may* expect to *eat and drink at my table in* that *my kingdom*, or to be treated as my distinguished favourites and most intimate friends; yea, and in my final and most triumphant appearance, when I shall sit on the throne of my glory, you may expect to be assessors with me on that grand occasion, *and* to *sit upon thrones*, as I formerly promised you (Mat. xix. 28), *judging the twelve tribes of Israel*[b], and condemning the whole impenitent world for their contempt of that gospel which you, as the chief ministers of my kingdom, are to offer and unfold to them.

Luke XXII. 30

and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

John XIII. 18

But when I speak in this manner of your final honour and happiness. *I speak not of you all: I know* the real character, and all the most secret views and transactions of those *whom I have chosen*; and could long ago have fixed a mark of infamy on the traitor, and have put it out of his power to execute his wicked purpose: *but*, as I chose him to be one of my companions, I leave him to go on, *that the scriptures may be fulfilled*, which says (Psal. xli. 9), "*He that eateth bread with me*, and has been nourished by my care and favour, *hath lift up his heel against me*, like an ungrateful brute that kicks at the kind master who feeds him[c]." Such treatment David met with from those whom he trusted; and such I know that I am to expect.

JOHN XIII. 18. I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lift up his heel against me.

19 And this *I tell you now, before it comes to pass, that when it comes* to be accomplished, *you may* be so far from doubting of the truth of my mission

19 Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass,

b *Judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*] The interpretation given of this promise here (and before on Mat. xix. 28, sect. cxxxvii. p. 107) appears to me preferable to that which refers it only, or chiefly to the *power* which the *apostles* had in the *Christian church*, as the authorized ambassadors of Christ.—It by no means implies that Paul and Barnabas, the *apostles of the Gentiles*, shall be excluded from the honour of being *assessors* with Christ in his kingdom (compare 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. Rev. ii. 26, 27. iii. 21.) but seems plainly to allude to the *courts of judicature* among the Jews, where the inferior judges sat in a *semicircle* round the chief judge, who had his seat in the middle point of it. Compare Rev. iv. 4. xxi. 14.

c *He that eateth bread with me*, &c.] When these words are so plainly to be found, Psal. xli. 9. it seems very unnatural, with Mr. *Jeffrey* (in his *Review*, p. 187), to imagine they refer to Psal. lv. 12, 13. because something like the sense of them occurs there. Nor is it necessary, with Mr. *Pierce* (*Dissert.* iii), to suppose a *trajection* in these *two verses*, and render them, *I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen: but I tell you this before-hand, that when it shall come to pass that the scripture shall be fulfilled*, "*One that eateth of my bread hath lift up his heel against me*," *ye may believe that I am he.* I rather think, with Brennius, that it is an *accommodation*; and that the sense and connection are to be explained accordingly, as in the *paraphrase*.

d *The*

pass, ye may believe that I am *he*.

mission upon that account, that, on the contrary, you may more firmly *believe that I am* [*he*], that I told you I was even the true Messiah. SECT. clxx. John XIII. 20.

20 Verily, Verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.

And, whatsoever therefore I shall suffer, let not your zeal to carry on my cause be lessened, but stedfastly persist in your adherence to it, with a firm persuasion that I will support you in it; for in this view I look upon your interest as my own, and as I formerly declared (Mat. x. 40. sect. lxxvi. and Luke x. 16. sect. xcvii.) so now *I most assuredly say unto you, Whoever entertains* and shews regard to you, or *any of my* other *messengers*, as coming in my name, *entertains me; and whoever entertains me, entertains him that sent me;* as, on the other hand, when you or they are slighted, the affront redounds to me and to my Father.

21 When Jesus had thus said [—2 The devil having now put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray him], he was troubled in spirit, and [MARK, as they sat, and did eat, Jesus] testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, That one of you [MARK, which eateth with me] shall betray me; [LUKE, *and* behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me, *is* with me on the table.] [MATT. XXVI. 21. MARK XIV. 18. LUKE XXII. 21. JOHN XIII. —2.]

Now *when Jesus had thus said,* he made a solemn pause. (*The devil*, as was observed before, *having already*, by his vile and pernicious insinuations, *put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot*, [*the son*] *of Simon* [d], *to betray him* into the hands of his murderous enemies.) And, as our Lord well knew that Judas was then watching for an opportunity to accomplish his horrid purpose, which he would execute that very night, *he was* much *troubled in spirit* to think of so ungrateful and impious a design in one so near him, and so much obliged to him; *and as they sat* together, *and were eating* the paschal supper, *Jesus* openly *testified and said* with a deep sigh, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, That*, how incredible soever the hint I just now gave you may seem, *one of you who is eating with me* in this friendly and intimate manner *will* quickly *betray me* to those that thirst for my blood [*and*] *behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is* now *with me on the table.* 21

22 Then the disciples [were exceeding sorrowful, and] looked one on another,

Then the disciples were exceedingly grieved to hear of his being betrayed at all, and much more to be told that it should be by one of their own number, while, no one being singled out from the rest, the suspicion lay in common among them; *and* they *looked* stedfastly *on each other* for some 22

[d] *The devil having already put it into the heart of Judas*, &c.] That Satan entered into Judas before he went to the *chief priests*, and agreed to *betray his Master* to them, had been observed before, Luke xxii. 3. p. 270; and that this clause of John xiii. 2. would be inserted here, was intimated in the close of *note* [a], sect. clxix. p. 277, where I accounted for this *transposition*.

SECT. CLXX.

John XIII. 22.

some time in silence, *doubting of whom he spake,* and studious to observe in whose countenance they might read any peculiar confusion, which might look like an indication of guilt: *and,* as they none of them knew where to fix it, but the vile wretch himself, *they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it could be that was about to do this thing;* and, earnestly desirous to be freed from the suspicion of such heinous wickedness, they applied themselves to Christ, *and began every one of them to say to him, one by one, Lord, is it I* that am this guilty creature[e]? Thou knowest that my very heart abhors the thought, and I hope I shall never be capable of entertaining it.

ther, doubting of whom he spake: [LUKE, and they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing;] and [began every one of them to say unto him [MARK, one by one], Lord, is it I?] [MAT. XXVI. 22. MARK XIV. 19. LUKE XXII. 23.]

23 *Now one of his disciples,* namely John, *whom Jesus loved* with a peculiar tenderness, and honoured with the most intimate friendship, sat next him at the table, on his right-hand; and, as they were all in a reclining posture, each of them resting on his left elbow, so in the place where John was seated he was *leaning on the bosom of* 24 *Jesus.* And as the question was almost gone round, and Jesus made no answer to it, but rather seemed to be swallowed up in mournful contemplation, *Simon Peter therefore* looked upon John, and *beckoned to him* with a motion of his head[f], by which he intimated his desire *that he should* privately *ask* him *who it might be of whom* 25 *he spake. He then, lying down* closer *on the breast of Jesus,* that he might put the question without being heard by the rest of the company, secretly whispered and *said to him, Lord, who is it?* 26 And *Jesus answered* him with a low voice, *It is he to whom I shall give this sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop* in a thick kind of sauce made of dates, raisins, and other ingredients beaten together, and properly diluted[g], *he gave it to Judas Iscariot, [the son] of Simon,* putting it towards that part of the dish which was

23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom, one of his disciples whom Jesus loved.

24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

25 He then lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

26 Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon.

[e] *To say to him, one by one, Lord, is it I?*] I look on this as a strong proof that the facts mentioned John xiii. 23—26. did not happen a night or two before; for if Christ had then privately marked out Judas to John and Peter as the traitor, the information must surely have reached the rest of the company by this time.

[f] *Beckoned to him* with a motion of his head.] This is certainly the import of the word νευει, which might more exactly be rendered *nodded.*

[g] In a thick kind of sauce made of dates, &c.] The Jews still retain such a *sauce,* which they call *charoseth,* made of such kind of ingredients, about the consistence of *mortar,* to represent the *clay* in which their forefathers wrought while they were under bondage to the Egyptians. See *Buxt. Synag. Jud.* cap. 18, and *the Religious Ceremonies of all Nations,* Vol. I. p. 215.

[h] *He*

was nearest him, and directing it towards him. Upon which Judas put forth his hand to take it; *and* while he was just in this posture, others continuing the same question to Jesus, *he answered and said to them, [It is] one of the twelve [even] he that* now *dippeth his hand with me in the dish this very person shall betray me*[h]. And let him not vainly hope that I shall exert my miraculous power to rescue myself from the hands of mine enemies, after he has delivered me to them and secured to himself the wages of unrighteousness; for *the Son of man*, great and powerful as he will finally appear, *is indeed going* to sufferings and death[i], *as it is written* in the scriptures, *[and] determined* in the Divine counsels, *concerning him*:[k] *but* as those prophecies and counsels have no influence to destroy the free agency of the persons concerned in his death, so there will be a most terrible *wo to that man by whom the Son of man is* so perfidiously *betrayed*, and who presumes to set a price on his royal and sacred blood: *it had been well for that man if he had never been born*; for a speedy and most dreadful vengeance awaits him, which will

SECT. CLXX.

Mat. XXVI. 23

MAT. XXVI. 23. And he answered and said [unto them, *It is* one of the twelve,] He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. [MARK XIV. 20.]

24 The Son of man [indeed] goeth as it is written [LUKE, *and* determined] of him: but wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed: it had been good for that man, if he had not been born. [MARK XIV. 21. LUKE XXII. 22.]

[h] *He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish.*] Some very ingenious persons imagine that Christ by this phrase only declares it was one who sat on the *same side of the table* with him, and so eat out of the *same dish*; and, if it were so, there might seem a *gradation* in the discovery not observable on any other interpretation. But (not to insist upon it) that the lamb, which was to be roasted whole, Exod. xii. 9. was also to be served up in one dish, I cannot but conclude that, if this had been *our Lord's* meaning, on his saying here (as Mark relates it,) in the same breath, εις εκ των δωδεκα *one of the twelve*, he would have added εις εκ των εμβαπτομενων *one of those that dip* rather than ο εμβαπτομενος, which plainly signifies *the very person that dippeth*.

[i] *The Son of man is indeed going.*] As we often in common speech, say a person *is going* or *gone*, to intimate that he is *dying* or *dead* so *Elsner* shews (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 119.) that the word υπαγω has the ambiguity. Compare Josh. xxiii. 14. and Psal. xxxix. 13.—The repetition of that title of *the Son of man*, which is *twice* used here in the *same verse*, has a peculiar energy and dignity, not commonly observed.

[k] *As it is determined.*] As this passage is not liable to the ambiguities which some have apprehended in Acts ii. 23. and iv. 28. (which yet seem, on the whole, to be *parallel* to it in their most natural construction,) I look upon it as an evident proof, that those things are in the language of *scripture* said to be *determined*, or *decreed* (or exactly *bounded* and *marked out* by God, as the word ωριζω most naturally signifies,) which he sees will in fact happen in consequence of his volitions, without any necessitating agency; as well as those events of which he is properly the author (and, as *Beza* well expresses it, *Deus sequitur, emendate sane loquitur*, we need not fear falling into any impropriety of speech when we use the language which God has taught) I say, *without any necessitating agency*, because I apprehend that this text, among many others, must entirely overthrow the scheme which Mr. *Collibet* (in his *Inquiry into the Divine existence*, p. 97--102.) has so laboriously endeavoured to establish; and which the author of *the Persian Letters from Paris* (*Letter* lvi.) so confidently asserts, "That where God foresees an event he always determines to render it necessary, and so to suspend the moral agency and accountableness of the creature concerned in it." Were this the case, nothing could be more unjust (on the principles of these authors) than to foretell *punishments* to be inflicted for such actions; which is plainly the case here, and indeed in most other places where evil actions are foretold.

[l] *Thou*

SECT. CLXX.

will make the immortality of his being his everlasting curse.

Mat. XXVI. 25 *Then Judas who was indeed the person that betrayed him, answered* in some confusion, lest by his silence he should seem to confess his guilt, *and said, Master, is it I* that shall do this thing, and to whom thou referrest in these severe words? And *he said to him, Thou hast said* [*right;*] thou art the very person, and I will conceal it no longer [l].

25 Then Judas which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

John XIII. 27. *And after* he was thus expressly marked out, not only by *the sop* which Jesus gave him [m], but also by the answer which he had returned to his question, *Satan entered into him* with greater violence, and stirred up in his bosom such indignation and rage at the disgrace he had met with, that he could bear the place no longer; but prepared abruptly to leave it before the table was dismissed, *Then Jesus said to him, What you* are going to *do, do quickly;* farther intimating to him his perfect knowledge of the appointment he had made with the chief priests and elders, and admonishing him, as it were, not to lose the opportunity by over-staying his time. *But* the reference being thus particular to what none of the company but himself was privy to, *no man at the table knew* what was his meaning, or *for what purpose he spake this to him. For some* [*of them,*] *thought because Judas had the* keeping of the common *purse*, on which they were to subsist during their stay at Jerusalem, *that* it was as if *Jesus had said to him*, Take the first opportunity to *buy those* sacrifices, and other *things, which we shall need for the feast* to-morrow and on the following days [n]; *or*

JOHN XIII. 27. And after the sop, Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

29 For some of *them* thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast; or that he should give something to the poor.

l *Thou hast said right.*] This is plainly the import of the *original* phrase; *It is as thou hast spoken* (See Mat. xxvi. 63—65. Mark xiv. 61, 62. Luke xxii. 70. John xviii. 37.) Thus, *Now you say something*, signifies among us, *You speak right.*

m *After the sop.*] It seems very unnatural to apprehend, with Dr. *Reynolds* (in *his Works*, p. 101, 102,) that Judas was encouraged by *Christ giving him the sop* to hope that Christ would, after all, provide for his own safety, and admit him into favour again. Christ's words above expressly cut off all such hope; and I believe every reader will judge the common account given of the connection much more probable.

n *Which we shall need for the feast.*] This is one of the passages which has led Grotius and other considerable critics to conclude that *our Lord* kept the *passover* at least *one day sooner* than the rest of the Jews. The controversy is too large to be critically discussed here: I content myself with referring to Dr. Whitby's excellent *Dissertation* on the subject (in his *Appendix* to Mark xiv.) only observing, that the supposition of Christ's anticipating the day appointed by the law, is so improbable, that I think it more reasonable to suppose that the word *feast*, or *passover*, may signify the offerings attending the *whole feast*, and particularly those presented on the *first day of unleavened bread:* which is certainly the sense of the word elsewhere. (See Deut. xvi. 2.

and

or that perhaps he intended *he should give something to the poor*, which Christ used to do, though their stock was so small; but always did it in a very private manner, which made it the more probable that he should only give such an oblique hint of that intention. Of this they thought, rather than of any bad design of Judas; for they did not imagine that, if he was to prove the traitor, his wickedness could immediately take place; or that he was so utterly abandoned as to go away to accomplish it with those awful words of his master sounding, as it were, in his ears. SECT. CLXX. John XIII. 29.

30 He then having received the sop, went immediately out; and it was night.

But *he* was capable of committing the crime, even with this aggravation; and *therefore having*, as was said, *received the sop*, he *immediately went out* without any farther reply; *and* as *it was night*, which was the time he had appointed to meet those who were consulting the death of Jesus, under the covert of it he went to them, and fulfilled his engagements, in a few hours after, by delivering his Master into their hands. 30

IMPROVEMENT.

WHO would not gladly *continue with Christ* in the strictest fidelity, amidst all the *trials* which can arise, when he observes how liberally he repays his servants, and how graciously he seems to relish his own honours the more, in proportion to the degree in which those honours are shared with them; *appointing* them a glorious *kingdom*, and erecting *thrones* for each of them? And surely, though the *apostles of the Lamb* are to have their peculiar dignity in the great day of his triumph, there is a sense in which he will perform *to every one that overcometh*, that yet more condescending promise, *I will grant* him to *sit down with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne.* (Rev. iii. 21.) Let our souls in that confidence be strengthened to all the labours and sufferings to which he may call us forth. Luke XXII. 28. 29, 30

It is a melancholy reflection, that there should be any one in this select company, to whom this endearing promise did not belong; especially one who, having *eaten of Christ's bread*, should in such a sense and degree as *Judas, lift up his heel against him.* John XIII. 18.

Deliver

and 2 Chron. xxxv. 7—9.) And if this be admitted, it will obviate the most plausible argument for Grotius' opinion, which is that taken from John xviii. 28. Others grounded on John xiii. 1, 2. xix. 14. and Mat. xxvi. 5. are obviated in the *paraphrase* or *notes* on those places, as the attentive reader will easily perceive.

SECT. CLXX. Deliver us, *O Lord*, from any share in that guilt! We are treated as *thy friends;* we are set *at thy table:* let us not ungratefully *kick against thee*, while *the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib;* (Isa. i. 3.)

Mat. XXV. 16

If we would not do it, let us be *jealous* over ourselves *with a godly jealousy*. Happy are they whose *hearts* witness to their sincerity in the presence of him that searches them, and can *cheerfully* say, *Lord, is it I?* Let them say it *humbly* too; lest the infirmity of nature prevail upon them beyond their present purpose or apprehension, and lead them on to do that, the very thought of which they would now abhor.

Mat. xxvi. 22.

Mark xiv. 19.

How artfully must *Judas* have conducted himself, when on such an intimation no particular *suspicion* appears to have fallen on him! But how vain is that artifice, be it ever so refined, which, while it preserves a character in the sight of men, cannot in the least degree impose upon *Christ!* The day will come when he will lay open the false and ungrateful *hypocrite*, in a more overwhelming manner than that in which he here exposed *Judas;* and, whatever advantage he may have gained, either by professing religion, or by betraying it, he will undoubtedly find that *it had been good for him that he never had been born.*

Mat. xxvi. 23, 25

24

One would have imagined that an admonition like this, which laid bare the secrets of his heart, and warned him so plainly and faithfully of his danger, might have wrought some remorse in his heart, or at least have proved some impediment to the immediate execution of his design: but, being now given up by the righteous judgment of God to the influence of *Satan*, and the lust of his own depraved mind, he is exasperated, rather than reclaimed by it; and *immediately goes forth*, under the covert of the *night*, to hasten the accomplishment of that work of darkness, the consequences of which had been so awfully represented. *O Lord*, let thy grace, and thy love, do that for us which thy terrors alone cannot do! Let our hearts be melted by that nobler principle, and taught to abhor every thing which would displease thee! Oh, let them flow forth into such workings of *compassion* to the afflicted as engaged the blessed *Jesus* to relieve *the poor* out of his own little stock; and into those sentiments of *candor* which would not permit the *apostles*, even after this admonition, to imagine *Judas* altogether so bad as indeed he was, but led them to put the mildest construction on their Master's ambiguous address to him! Such may our *mistakes* be, wherever we do mistake; the errors of a *charity*, which would not by excessive rigour injure the vilest sinner, and much less the least and weakest of God's servants!

John xiii. 27. 30

29

SECT.

SECT. CLXXI.

Christ, having exhorted his disciples to mutual love, forewarns them of their approaching trial, and foretells Peter's fall, immediately before the eucharist. Luke XXII. 31—34. John XIII. 31, *to the end.*

JOHN XIII. 31.

THEREFORE when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.

JOHN XIII. 31.

IT was observed in the preceding section how Judas, being marked out both by Christ's actions and his words, quitted the place in a mixture of rage and confusion: *when therefore he was* thus *gone out*[a], *Jesus said* to the rest of his disciples as they sat at the table with him, *Now is the Son of man* just on the point of being *glorified* far more remarkably than ever; *and God* in a most illustrious manner *is* to be *glorified in him*, by the signal and extraordinary circumstances of his abasement and exaltation. And you may assure yourselves, that *if God be glorified in him, God will also glorify him in* and with *himself*, in such a degree as shall in the most convincing manner declare his intimate relation to him; *and* the time *will presently* come when he will eminently *glorify him:* for the Son of man is very shortly to enter on the honours of his celestial and universal kingdom, and in the mean time some rays of Divine glory shall shine through all that cloud of ignominy, reproach, and distress, which shall surround him.

SECT. CLXXI.

John XIII. 31.

32 If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him.

32

33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you: Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you.

My dear *little children*, whom I love even with parental tenderness, and whom my heart pities under all your trials and sorrows, it is *yet* but *a* very *little while* longer that *I am* to continue *with you;* a few hours more will part us: and when I am gone, *ye shall seek me, and* wish for my presence and converse; but, *as I said to the Jews*, that *whither I go, ye cannot come* (John vii. 34; and viii. 21, Vol. VI. p. 519, 533); *so now I say to you*, Ye cannot as yet come to the place

33

[a] *When therefore he was gone out.*] The reader will observe that, if the former reasoning relating to the *order* of this part of the story be just, Judas certainly *went out* before the *eucharist* was instituted. And indeed one cannot reasonably suppose Christ would have commanded him to *drink of the cup*, as the *blood shed for him for the remission of his sins*, when he had just before been declaring in effect that *his sins should never be forgiven.*

SECT. clxxi.

place whither I am going. But observe my parting words, and let them be written on your very hearts; for *I give* it *you* as *a new commandment*[b], and press you by new motives and a new example to a duty which hitherto, alas, has been too little regarded; and from henceforth would have you to consider it as confirmed by a new sanction, and to keep it ever fresh in your memories; *That ye love one another* with a most sincere and ardent affection, such as mankind have never known before; yea, I would now enjoin you, *even as I have loved you, that ye also* would *love one another*, with a friendship which may carry you through such difficulties and sufferings as I am going to endure for you all. This will be the most acceptable and the most ornamental token of your relation to me; and I recommend it to you, as the noblest badge of your profession[c]: for *by this shall all men know that you are my disciples* indeed, *if* they see *you have* that lively and generous *love for each other* which nothing but my gospel can be sufficient to inspire.

John XIII. 34. 34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

36 On this Jesus paused, that they might have an opportunity to reflect seriously on the important charge he had given them. And *Simon Peter*, touched with what he had said of his being ready to go whither they could not come, *said to him, Lord*, permit us to inquire, *whither art thou going?*

36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but

[b] *A new commandment.*] I apprehend this expression signifies much more than merely *a renewed command*. (Compare 1 John ii. 7, 8; and 2 John ver. 5.) It seems a strong and lively intimation that the engagements to *mutual love*, peculiar to the *Christian* dispensation, are so singular, and so cogent, that all other men, when compared with its votaries, may seem uninstructed in the school of friendship, and Jesus may appear, as it were, the first professor of that Divine science. *Jamblicus (Vit. Pythag.* cap. 33) seems very injuriously to have preferred the *Pythagoreans* to all other men on that account; but it may be observed, that both *he* and *Eunapius*, like many moderns, seem to have had very little regard to truth when falsehood might cast a slur on *Christianity*.——Dr. *Clarke* well observes that *our Lord* seems to have laid this peculiar stress on *charity*, as foreseeing that general corruption and destruction of true *Christianity*, which the want of it would cause among those that should call themselves his church. (*Clarke's Sermons*, Vol. III. p. 297.——*Raphelius (Annot. ex. Xen.* p. 137—139) has the best *note* I ever saw on the passage, though I think it hardly reaches the full spirit of it; in which he shews that Xenophon calls the *laws of Lycurgus* καινολαι νομοι, *very new laws*, several hundred years after they were made; because, though they had been commended by other nations, they had not been practised by them.—Perhaps *our Lord* may here insinuate a reflection, not only on that *party spirit* which prevailed so much in the Jews, but likewise on the *emulations* and *contentions* among the *apostles* themselves, which *mutual love* would easily have cured. In this sense it is still *a new commandment* to us, who generally act as if we had not yet got time to learn, or even to read it.

[c] The noblest badge of your profession.] It is well known that the *founders* of new societies appoint some peculiar *ornament, sign*, or *mode of living*, by which their followers may be known from others. This seems to be here alluded to.

[d] *Thou*

but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

ing? Jesus answered him, I tell thee, Peter, *Whither I am going thou canst not* directly *follow me now;* for thou art intended for service in my church for many future years: *but* let it suffice thee, that *thou shalt follow me afterwards* in the same way[d], and dwell perpetually with me. *Peter said to him,* in a transport of eager and tender affection, *Lord, why cannot I follow thee now?* Whatever difficulties and dangers may be in the way, the prospect of them does not discourage me; for *I will* most willingly *lay down my life for thy sake,* and had much rather die than part with thee.

SECT. CLXXI.

John XIII. 36.

37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

37

38—Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?—

But *Jesus answered him, Wilt thou* indeed so readily *lay down thy life for my sake?* Alas, thou knowest not thine own weakness, or thou wouldst never talk thus confidently.

38

Luke XXII. 31—And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat:

And the Lord added with great earnestness, and *said, O Simon, Simon,* I must tell thee, that an hour of terrible trial is just at hand, which will press harder than thou art aware on thee, and on all thy companions here: for *behold, Satan,* as in the case of Job (Job ii. 4, 5), *has requested* of God a permission [*to assault*] *you* all by furious and violent temptations, *that he may* toss you up and down, and *sift* [*you*] *like wheat* in a sieve: (compare Amos ix. 9.)

Luke XXII. 31

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

But I, foreseeing the danger to which thou, Peter, wilt peculiarly be exposed, have graciously prevented thee with the tokens of my friendly care, and *have prayed* to my Father *for thee, that* he would communicate to thee such supplies of grace that *thy faith may not* utterly *fail,* and sink under the violent shock it is to receive: *and* let me now exhort thee, that *when thou art returned* from those wanderings, into which I know thou wilt fall, to the paths of wisdom and duty[e], thou wouldst be sure to make it thine immediate care to *strengthen thy brethren;* and do thine utmost, all the remainder of thy days, to

32

[d] *Thou shalt follow me afterwards.*] I am ready to think *our Lord* here obliquely hints at what he afterwards farther signified in his command to Peter after his resurrection, when he ordered him to *follow him* (John xxi. 18, 19, sect. cci); namely, that Peter should *die on the cross* for his sake; which ancient *history* assures us that he did. See *Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* lib. iii. cap. 1.

[e] *When thou art returned,* &c.] Και σὺ ποτὲ ἐπιστρέψας, στήριξον τοὺς ἀδελφούς σου. I cannot think the authorities which the learned *Elsner* produces (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 276, 277) sufficient to induce us, with Sir Norton Knatchbull, to translate these words, *Do thou, some time or other, convert and strengthen thy brethren.*—For the signification of ἐπιστρέφειν, see Acts ix. 35; xi. 21; xiv. 15.

SECT. CLXXI.

to engage all over whom thou hast any influence, to a steady adherence to my cause, in the midst of the greatest difficulties [f].

Luke XXII. 33 *And* such was still the confidence that Peter had of his own stedfastness and zeal, that *he said to him*, with renewed eagerness and warmth, *Lord*, what I said but now is the deliberate sentiment and resolution of my heart: lead me therefore whither thou pleasest: for *I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death* itself, and whatsoever I may suffer by continuing with thee, none of the most cruel of thine enemies shall ever be able to part us.

33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

34 *But* Jesus, that *he* might convince him of his weakness, and prevent his ever trusting in his own heart again, *said* to him, *Peter*, I know the sincerity of thine intention, yet *I most assuredly say unto thee, It shall not be* the time of *cock-crowing to-day* [g], *before* thou shalt be so terrified at the faces of these enemies whom thou now defiest, *that thou shalt thrice deny that thou* so much as *knowest me*, and shalt solemnly disclaim all regard to me. (Compare Mat. xxvi. 34, and Mark xiv. 30, sect. clxxxi.)

34 And he said, [Verily, verily, I say unto thee] Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me. [JOHN XIII.—38.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Luke XXII. 33. ALAS, how ready are we to forget ourselves; and how much safer are we in *Christ's* hands than in our own! How frequently do we *resolve* like *Peter*, and in how many instances do we

[f] Make it thine immediate care, &c.] I can see no objection against taking the charge in this comprehensive sense: and as I question not but Peter, after he had *wept* his fall *so bitterly*, as we know he did, applied himself to rally his dispersed *brethren*, and to prevent their fleeing from Jerusalem, till the *third day* was over, in the morning of which he was up betimes, and early at the sepulchre of *our Lord*: (see John xx. 2, 3, sect. cxciv.) So indeed the strain of his *epistles* shews his long and affectionate remembrance of this solemn charge. Many passages of the *first* are peculiarly intended to animate his *Christian brethren* to a courageous adherence to Christ amidst the greatest dangers, 1 Pet. i. 6, 7; ii. 19, 20; iii. 14—18; iv. 12—19; v. 8, 9, 10; and the *second* has several cautions to guard them against the seductions of error, in some instances more to be dreaded than the terrors of the severest persecution. 2 Pet. i. 10, 12; ii. 1, 2, 20, 21; iii. 2, 17.

[g] *It shall not be* the time of *cock-crowing to-day.*] A careful perusal of sect. clxxxi. compared with this, will shew why I have not *here* brought in the account which Matthew and Mark have given us of Christ's admonitions to Peter and his *brethren* on this head; which appear to be the renewal of this some hours after. As it is plain from thence and the event, that *the cock* actually *crew* before Peter's *third denial*, we must certainly take the words of Luke and John, as in *this version*, for the common time of *cock-crowing*, which probably did not come till after *the cock* which Peter heard had *crowed* the *second* time, and perhaps oftener. For it is well known those vigilant animals, on any little disturbance, often *crow at midnight*, or before it; though they do not come from their roost till about *three in the morning*, which was usually called *the cock-crowing*. (Mark xiii. 35.) See Dr. *Whitby's note* on Mat. xxvi. 34.

we *fall* like him! We see the malice of *Satan*, and how eagerly he *desired* to try the *apostles*, and even to *sift* them *as wheat:* we see also the gracious care of our *Redeemer*, who, foreseeing the danger of his servants, laid in an unsought remedy, to which they respectively owed their security, or their recovery. SECT. CLXXI. 31 32

Let us rejoice that the great enemy is under such restraints, and can have no power against us, unless by *permission* from above. Let us rejoice that *Christ* is a constant and invariable Friend to his people; and still appears as an *Advocate with the Father*, and as a tender faithful *Shepherd*, watching over them for good, while *Satan* is *seeking to devour them.* (1 Pet. v. 8.) If at any time that adversary *get an advantage* over us, let us endeavour in the strength of Divine grace an immediate recovery; and *when restored*, let us exert ourselves to *strengthen our brethren:* for surely it is most reasonable that we, who are *surrounded with* such various, and such sensible *infirmities*, *should have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.* (Heb. v. 2.) 32

In this instance, as in all others, let us be mindful of the dying *charge*, the *new commandment* of our dear *Lord;* and let us shew upon all occasions this distinguishing *badge* of our relation to him, even our *love to each other.* So will our profession be adorned, and *the Son of man* be farther *glorified*, by the conduct of his servants on earth: so shall he at length *glorify us with himself*, and after a short absence call us to *follow him* into those regions of perfect love which must of course be the seats of everlasting joy. John xiii. 34 31 36

In the mean time, send down, O gracious *Emmanuel*, thy *Spirit of love* on all thy followers; that we may no longer glory in the little distinctions of this or that *party*, but may *shew we are Christians* by this resplendent ensign of our order! May we bind it on our shoulders as a mark of honour, and wear it as a crown upon our heads; that the spirit of hatred, reproach, and persecution may vanish like an unwholesome mist before the sun, and it may again be universally said, as of old, *Behold, how these Christians love one another!* Amen. 35

SECT. CLXXII.

Christ, at the conclusion of the passover, institutes the eucharist.
Mat. XXVI. 26—30. Mark XIV. 22—26. Luke XXII. 19, 20.

MAT. XXVI. 26.
AND as they were eating, Jesus took bread, [LUKE, and gave

MAT. XXVI. 26. SECT. CLXXII.

SUCH was the admonition that Christ gave to Peter, and such was his discourse with his disciples while they were at supper: *and* now, Mat. XXVI. *as* 26

SECT. clxxii.

Mat. XXVI. 26

as they were eating, or just as they had finished, the paschal supper[a], *Jesus took* a cake *of bread*; *and having* in a solemn manner *given thanks* to his heavenly Father, *and blessed* [*it*], that is, having implored the Divine blessing on it, and on the ordinance then to be instituted, that it might in all succeeding ages tend to the edification and comfort of his people[b]; *he brake* the bread into several pieces, *and gave* some of [*it*] *to* each of *the disciples* present, *and said, Take* this bread, and *eat* it with reverence and thankfulness; for *this is my body*, that is, it is the sensible sign and representation of my body[c], *which is* freely *given*, and is speedily to be broken, bruised, wounded, and even slaughtered for you. *Do this* hereafter, in your assemblies for religious worship, *in* a pious and affectionate *commemoration of*

gave thanks,] and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, [LUKE, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.] [MARK XIV. 22. LUKE XXII. 19.]

[a] Just as they had finished the paschal supper.] Maimonides and other rabbies tell us that it was a rule among the Jews, at the end of the supper, to take a piece of the *lamb* for the last thing they eat that night. (See *Ainsworth*, as quoted before, *note* e, p. 274.) If this custom was as old as Christ's time, it would make this action so much the more remarkable. It would plainly shew that the *bread* here distributed was a very *distinct thing* from the meal they had been making together; and might be, in the first opening of the action, a kind of *symbolical intimation* that the *Jewish passover* was to give way to another and nobler *divine institution*.

[b] *Blessed* it.] It is not expressly said in the *original* that Christ blessed *it*, that is, *the bread* (nor indeed that he brake *it*); but it is very reasonable to imagine that this *thanksgiving* was attended with a *prayer* that the Divine *blessing* might accompany *the bread*. And it is so very plain from 1 Cor. x. 16, that the *apostles* taught *Christians* to *bless the cup*, that I cannot but wonder that one of the most accurate and penetrating writers of our age should scruple to allow that *Christ blessed the sacramental elements*. The same word is used in Mat. xiv. 19. Mark vi. 41. viii. 7. and Luke ix. 16. where it is certain an extraordinary *blessing* attended *the bread* and *fishes* in answer to his prayers. (See also Mark x. 16. Luke ii. 34. and Gen. ii. 3. *Septuag.*) It would indeed be absurd to interpret this of his conferring a virtue on *bread* so set apart, to work as a charm, either on men's bodies or souls; but I hope few *Christians* are so ill instructed as to imagine this to be the case in the *eucharist*; and all wise and faithful *ministers* will, no doubt, be solicitous to preserve them from so wild and mischievous a notion.

[c] *This is my body.*] When I consider that (as a thousand writers have observed) on the same foundation on which the Papists argue for *transubstantiation* from these words, they might prove, from Ezek. v. 1—5, that the prophet's *hair* was the city of Jerusalem; from John x. 9. and xv. 1, that Christ was literally *a door* and *a vine*; and from Mat. xxvi. 27, 28, and 1 Cor. xi. 25, that *the cup* was *his blood*, and that Christ commanded his disciples to *drink* and swallow *the cup*; I cannot but be astonished at the inference they would deduce from hence. Had Irenæus or Epiphanius reported such a thing of any *sect* of *ancient heretics* now extinct, one would have been so candid to human nature as to suppose the *historian* misinformed. As it is, one is almost tempted to suspect it to be the effect of *arrogance* rather than *error*; and to consider it as a mere insolent attempt to shew the world, in the strongest instance they could invent, what monstrous things the *clergy* should dare to say, which the wretched *laity* should not dare to contradict; nay, which they should be forced to pretend they believed. In this view the thought is admirable, and worthy the most malicious wit that ever *lorded it over the heritage of God*. But it may deserve some serious reflection, whether it be not an instance of *infatuation*, to which God has given them up, that it may be a plain mark to all that will use common sense, of the grossest *error* in a church which claims *infallibility*; and may not be intended by Providence as a kind of *antidote* against the rest of its *poison*.

[d] *After*

of me, that you may keep up the memory of my dying love, may openly profess your dependance on my death, and impress your hearts with a becoming sense of it. (Compare 1 Cor. xi. 24.)

SECT. clxxii.

Mat. XXVI.

27 And [LUKE, likewise also] he took the cup, [LUKE, after supper,] and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it! [and they all drank of it.] [MARK XIV. 23.] [LUKE XXII. 20.—]

And in like manner, after they had supped, he 27
also took the cup[d], that is, another cup different from that which he had before divided among them (Luke xxii. 17. p. 275); *and when he had given thanks* to his heavenly Father, and implored his blessing upon it, as a solemn sacramental sign, *he gave* [*it*] *to them, and said, Drink ye all of it*, that is, of the wine which it contains: *and* accordingly *they all drank* some *of it*. *For, said he to them*, as he 28
delivered it into their hands, *This cup* of wine *is* a representation of *my blood*, [*even*] of *that* blood which is the great basis *of the new covenant*, [*or*] is itself the seal of *the new covenant*[e], established *in my blood, which is shed for you*, [*and*] *for many* more, as the great ransom to be paid

28 For [he said unto them,] This [LUKE, cup] is my blood of the new testament [LUKE, *or* the new testament] [in my blood], which is shed [LUKE, for you *and*]

d *After they had supped he also took the cup.*] A learned *divine* of the establishment, who has favoured me with many sheets of accurate remarks on this work (which were of so great use to me in correcting it for the *second edition* as to demand my public acknowledgments), has objected to the supposition here made of its being *another cup*, which I have asserted in the *paraphrase*. But, with all due deference to his penetration (which is indeed very great), I must beg leave to observe, that it still appears most probable to me that it was as I there represent it; not merely because Luke mentions *a cup* taken *before the bread* (Luke xxii 17, p. 275), but because in the passage before us (ver. 20) he adds to that the mention of *a cup after it*. It is well known the Jews used *several cups* of wine *at the passover*, and one of them with the *antepast*, at the very beginning of the feast. (See *note* e on Mark xiv. 17, p. 274.) I know not how far so accurate a writer as St Luke might farther intimate this distinction by using the word δεξαμενος (ver. 17) with respect to the *first cup*, which strictly expresses *receiving it* from the hand of another, probably of the servant who waited at the table; whereas μασων *(taking)* is the word used ver 19, of which ποτριον here in ver. 20 is governed; which might have been equally proper, if *the cup* stood on the table before him, as *the bread* used in the *eucharist* probably did.

e The seal of *the new covenant.*] It seems very evident that when *the sacramental cup* here, and in 1 Cor. xi. 25, is called *the new covenant*, it must signify *the seal* of it; just as when *circumcision* is called *God's covenant*, Gen. xvii. 10, and it is there said, ver. 13, *My covenant shall be in your flesh*, we must understand *the seal* of it: and if by *the seal of the covenant* be meant; as I here explain it, and as most take it, "an appointed token of our accepting that covenant, and of God's favour to us on supposition of the sincerity of that acceptance;" it is so plain that the *eucharist*, as well as *baptism*, is such *a seal*, that they who disapprove the word deny not the thing. (See the *Plain Account of the Lord's Supper*, p. 168, 169.)—I have rendered the word διαθηκη, *covenant*, rather than *testament* or *will*, because it is evidently the more usual signification of the word; and because *the old covenant*, to which *the new* is opposed, cannot with any propriety be called *a testament*, with reference to the *death of any testator*, which is the idea chiefly insisted on by those who would retain our common *version* here. And, by the way, it appears on this principle that the *title* of our *Bible* is improperly and obscurely rendered, by a piece of complaisance to the *old Latin versions*, of which they were by no means worthy; and which they cannot at all the better deserve for that *sanction* which the *papal authority* has given to *one of them*, though it seems thereby to have been preferred to the *original*.

f *In*

SECT. CLXXII.

paid *for the forgiveness of sins*[f]; receive it therefore with a firm resolution to comply with the engagements of that covenant, and with a cheerful hope of its invaluable blessings: and do this,

Mat. XXVI.

28 as often as ye drink it, in a thankful commemoration of me, and with a proper care to distinguish between this and a common meal, appropriating what you do in this ordinance entirely to a religious purpose. (Compare 1 Cor. xi. 25.)

29 *And* then our Lord repeated what he had said as they were sitting down to supper (Luke xxii. 18. p. 275), *Verily, I say unto you, That from this time I will drink no more of this produce of the vine*[g], *until that day when I shall drink it new with you in the kingdom of God my Father:* that is, till, being risen from the dead, I have received my mediatorial kingdom, and we shall share together in much nobler entertainments than earth can afford, even in its highest religious solemnities, which shall then be happily superseded.

30 *And when*, according to the usual custom at the close of the passover, *they had sung an hymn* of praise to God at the conclusion of the eucharist[h], and had passed some remaining time in those discourses, and in that prayer, which will be

and] for many, for the remission of sins.—— [MARK XIV. 24. LUKE XXII.—20.]

29 But [verily] I say unto you, I will [no more] drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of [God] my Father. [MARK XIV. 25.]

30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out unto the

[f] *In my blood, which is shed*—as the great ransom to be paid *for the forgiveness of sins.*] I apprehend this ordinance of the *eucharist* to have so plain a reference to the *atonement* or *satisfaction of Christ*, and to do so solemn an honour to that *fundamental doctrine of the gospel*, that I cannot but believe that while this sacred institution continues in the church (as it will undoubtedly do to the end of the world) it will be impossible to root *that doctrine* out of the minds of plain humble *Christians* by all the little artifices of such forced and unnatural *criticisms* as those are by which it has been attacked. Unprejudiced and honest simplicity will always see the analogy this ordinance has to *eating the flesh of the Son of God, and drinking his blood*; and will be taught by it to feed on him as *the lamb that was slain* by the gracious appointment of God *to take away the sins of the world.* The enemies of this heart reviving truth might as well hope to pierce through a coat of mail with a straw as to reach such a truth, defended by such an ordinance as this, by any of their trifling sophistries.

[g] *I will drink no more of this produce of the vine.*] This may seem an intimation, that though *Christ drank with them* after his resurrection (Acts x. 41), he did not make use of *wine.* Perhaps their poverty might not allow them often to drink it; and we do not find that he was ever present at any feast; at least we are sure he never celebrated *another passover* with them. Nor does it appear that he partook of the *eucharist* with them, or ever administered it, but at this time of its institution.

[h] *An hymn* of praise to God.] The *hymn* that was usually sung by the Jews at the *passover* is what they call the *Hallel*, which began at Psal. cxiii. and ended with Psal. cxviii. some of which *psalms* might be used by *our Lord* at the close of the *eucharist*, as very suitable to this occasion; though it is uncertain whether (as Grotius and some others think) it might not be some other *hymn*, more closely adapted to the celebration of the *eucharist.*—I thought it proper here to conclude the story of the *passover*, and to mention *their going out*, though that did not immediately follow on their *singing the hymn.* Some such little anticipations seem to me an advantage rather than an impropriety in any *harmony*, especially when attended with a *paraphrase*, or *notes*, and divided into such short *sections* as those must be which are intended for the *use of families.*

the mount of Olives. [MARK XIV. 26.] be the subject of the following sections, *they went out to the mount of Olives;* where our Lord had determined to spend some time in devotion, though he knew that Judas and his enemies would come thither to seize him. SECT. clxxii. Mat. XXVI. 30

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us now review, with most thankful acknowledgment, this gracious *legacy* of our dying *Redeemer*, this reviving and nourishing *ordinance*, which he instituted for the benefit of his church *the same night in which he was betrayed:* (1 Cor. xi. 23.) So tenderly did his love for them prevail when his heart was full of his own sorrows: May we always consider to what purposes this holy rite was ordained; and as we shall see the wisdom of the appointment, so we shall also be both awakened to attend to it, and assisted in that attendence! Mat. xxvi. 6.

It is the *memorial* of the *death of Christ*, by which we represent it to others, and to ourselves. May we be ever ready to give this most regular and acceptable token, that *we are not ashamed to fight under the banner of a crucified Redeemer!*—It is also the *seal* of the *new covenant in his blood.* Let us adore the grace that formed and ratified that *everlasting covenant*, so well *ordered in all things*, and so *sure;* (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.) And whenever we approach to this *sealing ordinance* may we renew our consent to the demands of that *covenant*, and our expectation of those blessings which are conveyed by it! a *consent* and *expectation* so well suited to the circumstance of its being ratified by the *blood of Jesus.* Thus may every attendance nourish our souls in grace, and ripen them for glory; that at length all may be fulfilled and perfected *in the kingdom of God.* Luke xxii. 19. Mark xiv. 25.

In the mean time may God, by the influences of his Spirit, give to all professing *Christians* right notions of this *ordinance*, and a due regard for it; that, on the one hand, none may, under the specious pretence of honouring it; live in the *habitual neglect* of so plain and important a duty; and that, on the other, it may never be *profanely invaded* by those who have no concern about the blessings of that *covenant* it ratifies, and impiously prostitute it to those secular views, above which it was intended to raise them! And may none that honour the great Author of it encourage such an abuse, lest they seem to lay the very *cross of Christ* as the threshold to the temple of those various *idols* to which ambitious and interested men are bowing down their souls!

SECT. CLXXIII.

Christ, having warned his apostles of the danger to which they would be exposed, comforts them with the views of future happiness, and with the assurance of his own gracious presence, and that of his Father, in the way to it. Luke XXII. 35—38. John XIV. 1—14.

LUKE XXII. 35.

SECT. CLXXIII. THOUGH we mentioned Christ's going out to the mount of Olives, after he had instituted the eucharist, it is very material to observe, that before he quitted the guest-chamber in which he had supped, he entertained his disciples with some large and affectionate discourses, and put up an excellent prayer with them, which we shall now relate. *And,* to introduce these discourses, *he said to them, When I sent you,* my apostles, *out* on your important embassy some time ago, *without either purse* to supply you with money, *or scrip* to take provisions with you, *or shoes* besides those on your feet, (Mat. x. 9, 10, Vol. VI. p. 391.) *did you want any thing* necessary for the support of life? *And they said,* No, Lord, we very well remember that the care of providence over us was such that we wanted *nothing;* but wherever we came we found the hearts of strangers opened even with surprising freedom to assist and relieve us.

Luke XXII. 35

LUKE XXII. 35. AND he said unto them, When I sent you out without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

36 *Then he said to them,* This was indeed the case in your former mission; *but now* you must expect much harder usage than before, and will be exposed to greater sufferings and dangers in the prosecution of your ministry; and therefore *let him that has a purse take* [*it*], *and also a scrip,* if he has one; *and let him that has no sword* be ready even to *sell his garment and buy one* with the price of it: so long a journey, and so sharp a conflict, is before you, that you had need be well armed and furnished for it.

36 Then said he unto them, But now he that hath a purse let him take *it,* and likewise *his* scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

37 *For I assure you, That* my enemies are now about to apprehend me as a malefactor, and, after all the love that I have shewn to an ungrateful word, *this* remarkable prophecy, *which is written* concerning me, (Isa. liii. 12.) *must yet be accomplished in me,* "*And he was numbered with the transgressors:*" *for* indeed all *the things* which are written *concerning me* in

37 For I say unto you, That this that is written must yet be accomplished in me. And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

in the scripture-prophecies must quickly *have an end*, and receive their accomplishment in my sufferings and death. Now you may easily guess at the reception you are like to meet with when you come to preach in the name and authority of one who has suffered as a malefactor, and yet demands faith and obedience as an almighty Saviour. SECT. clxxiii. Luke XXII. 37

38 And they said, Lord, behold, here *are* two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

And they said, Lord, behold here are two swords 38 that we are furnished with already [a], which we are resolved, in case of any violent assault, to use in thy defence. *And he said to them, it is enough* for weapons of this sort: my chief intent is to direct you to another kind of defence, even that which arises from piety and faith [b].

JOHN XIV. 1. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God; believe also in me.

Let not your heart therefore *be troubled*, though I am going to leave you in a world where you will seem likely to become an helpless prey to the rage and power of your enemies: *believe in God*, the almighty Guardian of his faithful servants, who has made such glorious promises to prosper and succeed the cause in which you are engaged; and *believe also in me*, as the promised Messiah, who, whether present or absent in body, shall always be mindful of your concerns, as well as ever able to help you [c]. John XIV. 1.

2 In my Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you.

And, to establish your faith and comfort, accustom yourselves often to look forward to the heavenly world, as those who are well assured that *in my Father's house* from whence I came, and whither I am going to take up my residence, there *are many mansions* [d]; and it is really a spacious 2

a *Here are two swords.*] Probably (as Mr. *Cradock* conjectures, in his *Harmony*, part. ii. p. 209.) some of the *apostles* brought these *swords* along with them, in their journey from Galilee and Peræa, to defend them against robbers. It afterwards appears that one of them was Peter's. See John xviii. 10. sect. clxxxiii.

b My chief intent is to direct you to another kind of defence, &c.] This is strongly intimated by his saying, *Two swords* were *enough*; for they could not be sufficient to arm *eleven* men.

c *Believe in God, believe also in me.*] Πιστευετε εις τον Θεον, και εις εμε πιστευετε. These words are so very ambiguous that (as Erasmus observes) they may be rendered as *here*; or as our English translation; or *Ye believe in God, and ye believe in me*; or *Believe in God; and ye believe in me*; and different *commentators* have taken them in all these very different senses. But it appears most natural to render πιστευετε alike in both places; and it is certain an exhortation to *faith in God*, and in *Christ*, would be very seasonable, considering how weak and defective their faith was. (See ver. 9.)—The transition from the passage in Luke to this in John appears so easy, placing the paragraphs in this *order*, that I wonder no *harmonizers* should have observed it before.

d *In my Father's house, are many mansions.*] Mr. Le Moyne thinks Christ alludes to the various apartments in the *temple*, and the vast number of persons lodged there. Μονας signifies *quiet and continued abodes*, and therefore seems happily expressed by our English word *mansions*; the etymology and exact import of which is just the same.

e *And*

SECT. clxxiii.

John XIV. 2.

cious and glorious abode, where there will be ample room to receive you, and every thing to accommodate you in the most delightful manner: *and* indeed *if* it were *not* so, as I know you have still acted with regard to the happiness of a future world, though too much mingled with inferior views, *I would* before this time *have told you* so expressly, and not have permitted you to impose upon yourselves by an airy dream;[e] much less would I have said so much as I have done to confirm that expectation: but as it is in itself a glorious reality, so *I am* now *going*, not only to receive my own reward, but *to prepare a place for you* there[f]; or to make room for your coming thither, and to dispose every thing for your most honourable and comfortable

3 reception. *And if I* thus *go and prepare a place for you*, you may depend upon it that this preparation shall not be in vain, but that *I will* certainly act so consistent a part as to *come again, and receive you to myself*[g], *that*, as

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

e *And if not, I would have told you.*] Heinsius's version of these words seems much less natural: he would connect and render them [ει δε μη ειπον αν υμιν, πορευομαι &c. as if *our Lord* had said, "*Had it not been so, I would* have spoken in another manner, and *have told you, I am going to prepare a place for you*; but now I have no reason to say that, the place being already prepared." But it is hard to say what sense can be made of ver. 3. on this interpretation.—That the pious Jews considered all the glories of the *Messiah's kingdom* as introductory to the happiness of a future state of eternal glory, appears from a variety of *scriptures*; and indeed it is difficult to say how they could think otherwise, considering how much this had been insisted on; or how they could have been good and pious, had not this been their chief aim. Compare Mat. iii. 12. v. 8. 12. vi. 20. vii. 21. xiii. 43. xix. 16. xxii. 30. Luke xiv. 14. xvi. 9. John iii. 15, 36. vi. 54, 68. xi. 24—27.

f *I am going to prepare a place for you.*] When the glory of heaven is spoken of as *prepared before the foundation of the world* (Mat. xxv. 34.) this only refers to the *Divine purpose*; but as that was founded in *Christ's mediatorial undertaking*, (Eph. i. 4—6.) it might properly be said that, when Christ went into heaven as our *High-priest*, to present (as it were) his own blood before the Father on our account, and as our *Forerunner* to take possession of it, he did thereby *prepare a place for us*; which the apostle expresses, (Heb. ix. 23, 24.) by his *purifying* or consecrating *the heavenly places* in which we are to dwell, which would have been considered as *polluted* by the entrance of such sinful creatures into them; as the *tabernacle* when *new made* was, by having passed through the hands of sinners, on which account *an atonement for the altar* itself, which was considered as *most holy*, was the first act performed in it when it was opened. (Exod. xxix. 36, 37.) And *an atonement* for the whole *tabernacle*, as polluted by the access of sinners to it, was to be repeated annually, Lev. xvi. 16.—It may not however be improper to observe, that the word τοπος is often translated *room*, (Luke ii. 7. xiv. 10, 22. 1 Cor. xiv. 16.) and thus the signification here may be, that Christ went to heaven *to make room for them*, or to remove those things out of the way which obstructed their entrance. This must at least be included; though the word ετοιμασαι may perhaps express still more.

g *I will come again*, &c.] This *coming* ultimately refers to Christ's solemn appearance at the *last day* to receive all his servants to glory; yet (as was hinted before in *note* f, on Luke xii. 40. Vol. VI. p. 582.) it is a beautiful circumstance that the *death* of every particular believer, considering the universal power and providence of Christ, (Rev. i. 18.) may be regarded as *Christ's coming* to fetch him home; whereas Satan is spoken of as having naturally *the power of death*, Heb. ii. 14.

h *We*

as we are now united in so dear a friendship, *you also* after a short separation, *may be where I am* and may dwell for ever with me. *And* surely I may say in the general, after all the instructions I have given you, that *you know whither I am going; and you know the way* that leads thither, and by which you may safely follow me; which I exhort you therefore that you would resolutely keep.

4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

But such was still the expectation that his disciples had of his erecting a temporal kingdom, that *Thomas*, upon hearing this, *says to him*, *Lord*, thou hast never yet informed us of the place, and *we know not* so much as *whither thou art going*[h], *and how* then *can we* possibly *know the way* thither? *Jesus says to him*, I have already intimated to you I am going to the Father; and did you but consider this, you would soon see that *I am* myself *the Way, and the Truth, and the Life*[i]; that I am to guide, instruct, and animate my followers in their passage to eternal glory, and that their progress will be sure and vigorous in proportion to the steadiness of their faith in me, and the constancy of their regards to me: and this indeed is the true and only way you can take; for *no man cometh to* the knowledge or enjoyment of *the Father*, to whom I am returning, *but by* means of *me*, whose proper office it is to introduce sinful creatures to his presence and favour. *If*, therefore, *you had known me* aright, *you would* surely *have known my Father also*[k], in whose glory my ministrations so evidently centre; *and* such indeed are the discoveries that I have made of him, and such the manifestations of the Divine perfections which you have seen in me, that in effect it may be said that *from henceforth you know him, and have* as it were already *seen him.*

5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest and how can we know the way?

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.

7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

Then *Philip*, one of the apostles, hearing these words, *says to him*, with a pious ardour becoming his character, *Lord*, do but *shew us the Father*

8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

h *We know not whither thou art going.*] It is probable Thomas might think that Christ intended to remove to some splendid palace on earth, to set up his court there for a while, before he received his people to the celestial glory.

i *I am the way, &c.*] *Our Lord* had so lately delivered the same sentiment in language much like this (John x. 9, p. 89), that it might well have been expected they should have understood him now.

k *If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.*] This is a most important truth; but it does not determine to what degree he must be explicitly *known*, in order to receive saving benefits by him.

SECT. lxxii.

ther, and bring us to the sight and enjoyment of him[1], *and it is* happiness *enough for us*; we desire no more, and resign every other hope in comparison of this. *Jesus says to him, Have I been with you* then *so long a time*, and conversed among you in so familiar a manner for successive years, *and hast thou not* yet *known me, Philip?* if thou hadst well considered who I am, thou mightest have better understood what I have now been saying; for *he that has seen me, has* in effect *seen the Father*, as I am the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person (Heb. i. 3): *And how* [*then*] *dost thou say*, after all that has passed between us, *Shew us the Father?*

John xiv. 9. 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father?

10 *Dost thou not* then *believe*, though I have before affirmed it so expressly (John x. 38, p. 91), *that I* [*am*] *in the Father, and the Father is in me*, by so intimate an union as to warrant such language as this[m]? *The words which I speak to you* from time to time, in which I discover and inculcate this important truth, *I speak not* merely *of myself; but* it is really *the Father who dwells in me* that gives me my instructions thus to speak; and it is *he* that operates together with me, and *performs the* miraculous *works* that you have so often seen, which are sufficient to demonstrate the truth of this assertion, mysterious as it is, and incredible as it might otherwise seem. *Believe me* therefore in what I have said, *that I* [*am*] thus *in the Father, and the Father is in me; or* if what you have so long known of my general character and veracity will not engage you to take it merely on my single testimony, *at least believe me on account of those works* in which you have so frequently beheld the Father acting with me, and which indeed afford so obvious an argument of it, that one might imagine the sight of a few of them might convince one that was before a stranger to me.

10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works.

11 Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

12 And yet *verily, verily, I say unto you*, That you

12 Verily, verily, I say

[1] *Lord, shew us the Father.*] The explication given in the *paraphrase* seems to me a more probable sense than that in which Mr. *Fleming* understands it; as if Philip had said, "Let us have a vision of *the Father* in a corporeal form, to testify the necessity of thy removal from us." (See *Fleming's Christology*, Vol. II. p. 202.) I cannot apprehend that the *apostles* thought the Father *visible*.

[m] *I am in the Father, and the Father is in me.*] It is remarkable that Philo, speaking of the *Logos*, has this expression, that *he is* ωαλ@· αιχ@· εν ω διαιτᾶται, *the Father's house in which he dwells*; which is nearly parallel to what the *apostle* says of Christ, Col. ii. 9, that *in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily*. See Dr. *Scott's Christian Life*, Vol. III. p. 559, *note* 2.

say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also: and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

you shall have, if possible, a yet stronger evidence than what you have already received: for *he that believes in me*[n], that is, many of my disciples in these early ages, and each of you in particular, shall receive such an abundant communication of the Spirit, that *the* miraculous *works which I perform, he shall perform also; yea*, works in some respect *greater than these shall he perform; because I go to my Father*, who has thought fit to reserve the most amazing gifts of the Spirit to honour my return into glory; in consequence of which you shall be enabled to speak with all foreign tongues, to give the Spirit by the imposition of your hands, and to propagate the gospel with such amazing success, as to make more converts in one day than I have done in the whole course of my ministry.

SECT. CLXXIII.

John XIV. 12.

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*.

And, in a word, you may depend upon it, that 13
whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, under the influence of that Spirit, and subservient to the great end of your life and ministry[o], *I will* certainly *do it*, *that* so *the Father may* still *be glorified in the Son*; who, when he is ascended up to heaven, will from thence be able to hear and answer prayer, and even in his most exalted state will continue to act with that faithful regard to his Father's honour which he hath shewn in his humiliation on earth. And in this confidence 14
I repeat it again, for the encouragement of your faith and hope, that I will be as affectionate and constant a friend to you in heaven as I have ever been upon earth; and *if you shall ask any thing in my name, I will* not fail to *do* [*it*].

IMPROVEMENT.

As we see in the beginning of this *section* that care of Christ over his servants which may engage us cheerfully to trust him for providential supplies, when employed in his work, so we see in the remainder of this, and in the following discourses, the most affectionate discoveries of the very heart of our blessed *Redeemer*, over-

Luke xxii. 35, 38

[n] *He that believes in me.*] It is most evident, in fact, that though this promise be expressed in such indefinite language, it must be limited as in the *paraphrase*.

[o] *Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name*, under the influence, &c.] As reason in general requires some such *limitation* as is here given in the *paraphrase*, so the conclusion of the verse plainly implies it; for it was only by the grant of such petitions that *the Father* could be *glorified in the Son*.

P With

SECT. CLXXIII. overflowing in every sentence with the kindest concern, not only for the safety but the comfort of his people. We see a lively image of that tenderness with which he will another day *wipe away all tears from their eyes:* (Rev. vii. 17.) Surely when he uttered these words he was also solicitous that *our hearts* might *not be troubled:* and therefore has provided a noble cordial, the strength of which shall continue to the remotest ages, even *faith in his Father, and in him.* Oh may that blessed principle be confirmed by what we have now been reading!

John xiv. 1.

Let us observe with what a holy familiarity *our Lord* speaks of the regions of glory; not, as his servants do, like one dazzled and overwhelmed with the brightness of the idea; but as accustomed and familiarized to it by his high birth [p]. *In my father's house are many mansions;* (delightful and reviving thought!) and many inhabitants in them, whom we hope through grace will be our companions there, and every one of them increase and multiply the joy.

2

It was not for the *apostles* alone that *Christ* went to *prepare a place:* he is *entered* into heaven as *our Forerunner* (Heb. vi. 20); and we, if we are believers indeed, may be said, by virtue of our union with him, to *sit together in heavenly places in him.* (Eph. ii. 6.) Let us continually be tending thither, in more affectionate desires, and more ardent pursuits. *We know the way;* we hear *the truth;* oh may we also feel *the life!* *By Christ,* as the *true and living way,* may we *come to the Father;* that we may have *eternal life,* in *knowing* him, *the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent!* (John xvii. 3.) In *Christ* may we *see him,* and have our eyes and our hearts open to those beams of the Divine glory which are reflected *from the face* of his *only-begotten Son,* who is *full of grace and truth!* (John i. 14.) Has he been thus discovered to us, as *our Father,* and *our God,* let it *suffice us.* Let it diffuse a sacred and lasting pleasure over our souls, though other desirable objects may be veiled or removed; and engage us to maintain a continual *fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* (1 John i. 3.)

John xiv. 4, 6.

9

8

To

[p] With what a holy familiarity *our Lord* speaks of the regions of glory, &c.] This is the remark of the pious *archbishop of Cambray,* in his incomparable *Dialogues on Eloquence* (which may God put it into the hearts of our *preachers* often and attentively to read); and is much illustrated by observing how the *apostles,* when describing the heavenly state, employ the most pompous and energetic language, and seem indeed to labour for words, and to be almost dazzled with the lustre and oppressed with the weight of the subject: (compare Rom. viii. 18, 19; 1 Cor. ii. 9; xv. 50, *&c seq.* 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18; v. 1—9; xii. 2—4; and 1 John iii. 2.) But Christ speaks of it with a familiar ease and freedom; just as a *prince,* who had been educated in a splendid court, would speak with ease of many magnificent things, at the sudden view of which *a peasant* would be swallowed up in astonishment, and would find himself greatly embarrassed in an attempt to explain them to his equals at home.

a Thus

To this we are invited by every declaration of his readiness to hear and answer our *prayers:* and though those *miraculous powers* of the *Spirit* are ceased, whereby the *apostles* were enabled to equal, or even to *exceed*, the *works* of their Master, yet as we have so many important errands to *the throne of grace*, in which the glory of God and the salvation of our souls is concerned, let us come with a *holy boldness* to it, in dependance on *Jesus*, that great *High-priest over the house of God*, who is *passed into the heavens*, and amidst all the grandeur of that exalted state regards his humble followers on earth, and ever appears under the character of their *Advocate* and their *Friend.*

SECT. CLXXIII. Ver. 13, 14 12

SECT. CLXXIV.

Christ proceeds in his discourse with his disciples, recommending a regard to his commandments as the best proof of their love to him, promising his Spirit, and declaring his readiness to meet his approaching sufferings. John XIV. 15, *to the end.*

JOHN XIV. 15.

IF ye love me, keep my commandments.

JOHN XIV. 15.

OUR Lord went on with his discourse to his apostles on this solemn occasion, and observing the lively flow of their affection to him in this tender conjuncture of circumstances, he added, *If you* do indeed *love me*, express that love by a constant care to *keep my commandments;* for that will be a surer test, and more acceptable expression of your regard to me, than all your trouble and concern at parting with me. *And* thus you may depend on the correspondent expressions of my friendship to you[a]: and particularly that *I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Comforter*[b], *that he may* more than supply the want of my bodily presence, and *abide with you*, not for a season only, as I have done, but *for ever;* [*Even*] *the*

SECT. CLXXIV. John XIV. 15

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

16

17 *Even* the Spirit of

17

[a] Thus you may depend on the correspondent expressions of my friendship to you.] The connection may possibly intimate that they might hope for an abundant degree of the *Spirit's* communication, in proportion to the prevalency of their *love* to Christ.

[b] *He will give you another Comforter.*] It is well known that the word παράκλητος may signify a *comforter*, an *advocate*, or a *monitor;* and it is evident the blessed *Spirit* sustained each of these characters: but this being a *consolatory discourse*, I chose to use the former, as *our translators* have done.—*Toland* says it is by no contemptible *criticism* that the Mahometans (instead of παράκλητον) read περικλυτον, that is, *the illustrious*, which answers to Mahommed in the Arabic language; and so urge this as a *prophecy of him.* (*Tol. Nazaren.* p. 13.) Yet he would probably have thought this *criticism* very contemptible in any but the enemies of *Christianity.*

• *I will*

SECT. CLXXIV.

John XIV. 17.

the blessed *Spirit of truth* and grace, *whom the world cannot* possibly *receive* as a Comforter, *because it neither sees him nor knows him;* being altogether destitute of his sanctifying influences, and refusing to admit his testimony to me: *but ye know him* in some measure, even now, by his powerful operations in you, and by you; *for he* already *dwells with you* in part, *and shall* quickly *be* more abundantly *in you,* by a much ampler communication both of his gifts and graces.

of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

18 Encourage yourselves therefore with the pleasing expectation, and be assured that *I will not leave you* neglected, like a family of helpless *orphans,* who have no friend or guardian surviving[c]; but *I will come to you* by my spiritual presence, and visit you by the most valuable tokens of my constant care. For it is but *yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more,* as it has done for some time past, though it knows me not; *but* after I have done conversing with the world, I will appear again to you, and *you* shall *see me* in such a manner as to feel the blessed effects of my distinguishing regard to you; for *because I live, you also shall live,* by means of those Divine influences you shall derive from me, to cherish the workings of grace in your hearts, and to train you up to a growing meetness for sharing with me in eternal life. (Compare 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11.) And *in that day,* when I fulfil this promise to you, *you shall* experimentally *know,* by the most evident and reviving tokens, *that I* [*am*] indeed *in my Father, and* that *you* also are *in me, and I in you,* by a most intimate and inseparable union. But this will only be the privilege of such as evidence their love to me by an obedience to my word; for *he that has my commandments* discovered to him, *and* diligently *keeps them, he it is that loveth me;* but none besides have any title to this character, whatever specious pretences they may make to it: *and he that* thus shews that he *loveth me, shall be loved by my Father, and I will* also *love him, and* in a most condescending and endearing manner *will manifest myself to him.*

18 I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more: but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

22 *Judas* was very much surprised at this; *not* Judas

22 Judas saith unto him,

[c] *I will not leave you orphans.*] *Elsner* justly observes that the case of those who have lost the presence and patronage of some dear friend, though not in strict propriety *a father,* is elegantly and tenderly expressed by this word ορφανος. (Compare 1 Thess. ii. 17, *Gr.*) See *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 341.

[d] Was

him, (not Iscariot,) Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

Judas *Iscariot;* for he, as it was said before, was gone out before our Lord began this discourse (chap. xiii. 31, sect. clxxi.) and had he been there, he was always too much on his guard to have dropped any hint of his view to Christ's temporal kingdom[d]; but another apostle of that name, who was also called Thaddeus and Lebbeus, the son of Alpheus, and the brother of James (see note[f] on Mark iii. 18, Vol. VI. p. 282), a near relation to our Lord himself[e]: this Judas, upon hearing Christ express himself in such a way, *says to him, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not to the world?* Dost thou not then intend to make a public appearance, which will be obvious to the eyes of all?

SECT. clxxiv.

John XIV. 22.

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

Jesus answered and said to him, As to that, it may be sufficient to tell you, that, as I said before (ver. 21), *If any man* sincerely *love me, he will* in an humble and obedient manner keep and *observe my word; and* if he shall be found to do so, *my Father,* who at all times has a tender regard to my honour and interest, *will* undoubtedly *love him; and we will* both of us *come to him,* by the favourable tokens of our presence, *and will make* [*our*] constant *abode with him:* you are therefore to understand what I said of manifesting myself to him that loves me, not of any corporeal and sensible appearance, but of such a spiritual and intimate correspondence as the invisible Father of glory and grace maintains with his people through me. 23

24 He that loveth me not, keepeth not my

But on the contrary, *he that does not* really *love me, does not observe* and 24

d Was always too much on his guard, &c.] It is observable, that Judas Iscariot was so finished a hypocrite, that we never find him saying one word of *Christ's temporal kingdom,* though probably the hope of preferment and gain in it was the chief consideration which engaged him to follow *our Lord.*—Let the reader indulge me while I tell him, that he owes this remark to that incomparable person, the late reverend Mr. David Some, of Harborough; and let him join with me in lamenting the fatal modesty which engaged him with his dying breath to consign to the flames those writings which (unfinished as some of them might have appeared) would probably have been the means of spreading among thousands that spirit of wisdom, piety, and love, into which the whole soul of the author seemed to be transformed.

e A near relation to our Lord himself.] His father Alpheus seems to have been the same with Cleopas; for as Judas and James were the sons of Alpheus (Luke vi. 15, 16), so James is elsewhere said to be the son of Mary (Mat. xxvii. 56. and Mark xv. 40), who was *the wife of Cleopas,* and *sister to the mother of our Lord* (John xix. 25); Judas is therefore numbered with *James, and Joses, and Simon,* among the *brethren* or near *kinsmen* of *our Lord* (Mat. xiii. 55, and Mark vi. 3); and, being so nearly *related to Jesus,* he might think himself peculiarly concerned to inquire into the meaning of an assertion which seemed inconsistent with the prospect of a *temporal kingdom,* in which, perhaps, he expected some eminent office.

SECT. CLXXIV.

John XIV. 24.

and keep *my words* with any constancy and resolution; and therefore must expect no such spiritual and eternal benefits, whatever outward privileges he may enjoy: see to it therefore, that you diligently hearken *and* attend to what I say; for *the word which you hear* me speak *is not* originally or merely *mine, but* it is [*the word*] *of the Father that sent me*, who has particularly given it in charge to me, that I should thus insist upon practical and universal holiness, as one great end of my appearance.

my sayings: and the word which ye hear, is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

25 And accordingly you know, that I have strongly insisted upon it as such; and *these things I have spoken to you* again and again, *while I con-*
26 *tinued* personally present *with you: But* when *the Comforter*, that I have promised you, is come; [*even*] *the Holy Spirit, whom the Father* after my departure *will send in my name*, to act as the great Agent in my cause, and to negotiate the affairs of my kingdom; *he shall teach you all things* which it is necessary for you to know, *and remind you of all things which I have said to you*, that you may not only recollect them in the fullest manner for your own instruction, but be able to record them for the edification of my
27 church in succeeding ages. In the mean time, as I am now departing from you, *peace I leave with you* as my legacy; and, as a blessing of the greatest moment and importance to you, *my peace I give unto you*; such a peace as none but I can impart, a peace with God and yourselves, as well as with your fellow-creatures, which will be the spring of solid and lasting happiness: and it is *not as the world* often *gives* and wishes peace, in an empty form of ineffectual, and often, perhaps, unmeaning compliment, that *I give* it *unto you;* but, as I most sincerely wish it, I will most certainly secure it to you. *Let not your heart* therefore *be troubled* at the thoughts of my departure, *neither let it be afraid* of what may befall you when I am gone; for I will help you to possess your souls in quietness and peace, and will establish it upon the firmest basis.

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being *yet* present with you.

26 But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

28 You need not then to be discouraged at the separation that will now be made between us; for as *you have heard how I* have *said to you*, that *I go away*, so also you have been informed of my intention in it, *and* know that I have added, I will *come* [*again*] *to you:* and surely *if you loved me* with a wise and rational affection, it would allay

28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice,

rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I.

allay your sorrows in the mean time, and, however you might have a mournful sense of your own loss, *you would rejoice* on my account, *because, I said, I go to the Father; for my Father* whose servant I am as Mediator, *is* in this respect *greater than me*, and consequently it must be my honour and happiness to be in a state of greater nearness to him than the present world will admit.

29 And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

And now I have told you this, that I have been discoursing to you concerning my own removal, my return to the Father, and the descent of the Spirit upon you, *before it comes to pass; that when it does come to pass, you may* more firmly *believe*, not only on account of the extraordinary nature of the events themselves, but also on account of their exact and evident correspondence with these predictions of mine[f].

30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

It will be your wisdom the rather to observe and review these things, as *I shall not hereafter* have time to *discourse much* more *with you* about them; *for* Satan, *the prince of this* apostate *world, is coming* to encounter me, and is raising a storm against me which will quickly separate us: *nevertheless*, I have this comfort, that *he has nothing in me*, no guilt of mine to give him power over me, nor any inward corruption to take part with his temptation.

31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

But he is permitted thus to attack me, and I contentedly submit to my approaching sufferings, *that the world may* see and *know*, on the most substantial evidence, *that I love the Father* so well, as to refuse nothing whereby his glory may be advanced; *and even as the Father has commanded me, so I do*, how painful or expensive soever that obedience may be. And therefore, that we may be prepared for this hour of temptation that is coming upon us, *arise let us go* from *hence*[g], and retire to a place where we may more conveniently attend our devotions; and where I may be ready, when my cruel enemies shall come to apprehend me, to yield myself into their hands and to submit to what my Father has appointed for me.

IMPROVE-

[f] *You may* more firmly *believe*, not only on account, &c.] It is very judiciously observed by Dr. *Jenkin* (in his excellent *Defence of Christianity,*) that when *miraculous events*, are also the accomplishment of *prophecies*, the degree of evidence arising from them is the greatest that can possibly be conceived.

[g] *Arise, let us go hence.*] See *note* a, in the next *section*.—That καὶ sometimes signifies *though* or *nevertheless*, as I have rendered it ver. 30. see *note* e on John xvii. 25. sect. clxxx.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. CLXXIV. John xiv.

SURELY, if we are not entirely strangers to the Divine life, we cannot read such discourses as these without feeling some warm emotions of *love to Christ:* and if indeed we feel them, let us consider how they are to be expressed. *Our Lord* directs us to
15, 21 do it in the most solid and the most acceptable manner, by a constant care to *keep his commandments;* and sure such *commandments* as *his* cannot be *grievous* to a soul that truly loves him: (1 John v. 3.) The more we live in the practice of them, the
16, 17 more cheerfully may we expect the abundant *communications of his Spirit* to animate and strengthen us.

18 If we are *Christians* indeed, let us not, in any circumstance of life, look on ourselves as helpless and abandoned *orphans.* Human friends may forsake us; but *Christ will come to us;* he will
21, 23 *manifest himself* to the eye of faith, though to the eye of sense he is invisible; and his heavenly *Father will love us;* and watch over us for good: yea, he *will come and dwell* in the obedient soul by the gracious tokens of his intimate and inseparable presence. And do we any of us experience this? We have surely reason to say that by way of admiration which the *apostle* said by way of in-
22 quiry, *Lord, how* and whence *is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not to the world!* What have we done to deserve these gracious and distinguishing manifestations! Nay, how much have we done to forfeit them! even more than many, from whom they are withheld!

27 With unutterable joy let us review this rich legacy of our dying Lord: *peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you,* Lord, evermore give us *this peace* with God, and with our own consciences! for if *thou* wilt *give quietness, who can make trouble?* (Job xxxiv. 29.) How serenely may we then pass through the most turbulent scenes of life, when all is quiet and harmonious within? Thou hast *made peace through the blood of thy cross,* (Col. i. 20.) may we preserve the precious purchase and inestimable gift inviolate, till it issue in everlasting peace! In this let our *hearts* be encouraged; in this let them *rejoice;* and not in our own happiness alone, but also in that of our now glorified and
28 exalted *Redeemer.* As the members of his body, we ought certainly to maintain a pleasing sympathy with *our Head,* and to triumph in his honour and felicity as our own. *If we love Christ,* we should *rejoice, because he is gone to the Father.* And the same consideration may in its degree comfort us when our pious friends are removed: if we *love them* with a rational and generous friendship, and are not too much influenced by selfish affections under that specious name, *our joy* for their exaltation will greatly temper the *sorrow* which our loss must give us.

Our

Our Lord uttered these words in the near views of a grievous assault from *the prince of this world*, who is the prince of darkness; but there was *no corruption in him* to take part with the enemy. Too much, alas, does he find *in us* to abet his temptations: let us earnestly pray that the *grace of Christ* may be *sufficient for us*; and that as *his love to the Father* engaged him to go through this painful conflict with the tempter, *his love to us* may make us partakers of his victory. *In his name* let us *set up our banners*; and the *powers of hell* shall flee before us.

SECT. CLXIV. Ver 30, 31

SECT. CLXXV.

Christ represents himself under the emblem of a vine, and exhorts his disciples to faith and persevering obedience. John XV. 1—11.

JOHN XV. 1.

I AM the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

JOHN XV. 1.

SECT. CLXXV. John XV. 1

SOME accident occasioning a little delay before they left the guest-chamber, in which they had eaten the passover, our Lord improved the precious moments in addressing his disciples to the following purpose [a]: *I am*, said he, *the true* and most excellent *vine* [b]; by its union with whom my church is nourished; *and my Father is the husbandman*, who has planted this vine, and by whom it is cultivated, that it may produce delightful clusters for his service. And *every branch* that is *in me* by an external profession, *which* yet is found to be a barren branch, and

2 Every branch in me

2

[a] Some accident occasioning a little delay, &c.] This may be gathered from the conclusion of the foregoing *chapter*, where *our Lord* had said, *Arise, let us go hence*: for it seems very unreasonable to imagine that *our Lord* would address so important a discourse as this to *eleven* persons, as they were walking, especially in the streets of Jerusalem, at this public time; much less would he pour out so solemn a *prayer* as that in chap. xvii. in such a circumstance: yet John xviii. 1. (sect. clxxxi.) strongly implies that all that follows between this and that happened *before he went forth* from Jerusalem. I conclude, therefore, that all this passed *before* they quitted the house where the *passover* was eaten, though they probably rose from the table as soon as those words, *Arise, let us go hence*, were spoken. A short delay might leave room for this; for any one who will make the trial will find that these *three chapters* may be deliberately read over in a quarter of an hour, and therefore might be spoken in that small interval of time.

[b] *The true* and most excellent *vine*.] So *the true light* (John i. 9.) and *the true bread*, chap. vi. 32. evidently signifies. (See *Raphael. Annot. ex Xen.* p. 141.)—His having lately drank with his disciples of the *fruit of the vine*, and having afterwards declared that he would *drink no more of it till he drank it new in the kingdom of God*, (Mark xiv. 25. page 299.) might possibly occasion Christ's alluding to it: (see *Grotius, in loc.*) Or perhaps they might now be standing near a window, or in some court by the side of the house, where the sight of *a vine* might suggest this beautiful *simile*. (Compare Psal. cxxviii. 3.) That circumstance was, no doubt, common in Judea, which abounded with the finest grapes. See Gen. xlix. 11, 12. Numb. xiii. 23. and Deut. viii. 8.

[c] *That*

SECT. CLXXV.

John XV. 2.

and *bears no fruit, he taketh* quite *away*; that is, he cuts it off in his righteous judgment, *and* entirely separates it from me: but *every* [*branch*] *which brings forth fruit, he purgeth*, that is, he prunes and dresses it, and on the whole, exercises such wise and kind discipline towards it (though that discipline may sometimes seem severe,) as may best answer the great end of its production, *that it may bring forth* yet *more fruit*, than which there can be nothing more desirable [c].

me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 And thus it is with you; for *now* the traitor is gone out I may affirm, with the exception that I made before (compare John xiii. 10, 11, sect. clxxi.) that *you are* all thus purged, in such a manner as to be *clean, by means of the word which I have spoken to you*, whose sanctifying influence has operated on your hearts. *Continue* therefore *in me*, by the renewed exercise of humble faith and love; *and I* will be *in you*, to nourish and supply you, as from a living root, with every necessary grace: for *as*, in the natural world, *the branch cannot bear fruit of itself*, but must presently wither, *unless it continue in* a state of union with *the vine*, and be nourished by sap from thence; *so neither can you* be able to produce the fruits of genuine and acceptable obedience, *unless you continue in me*, and have the life of grace maintained within you by a vital union with me.

3 Now ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I repeat it again, as a matter of the utmost moment, That *I am the vine*, and *ye* [*are*] *the branches*, in the sense I have already explained. *He* therefore *that abides in me* by such an intimate and vital union, *and* in whom also *I* abide by the operations of my Holy Spirit *in him, he*, and he only, *bringeth forth much fruit*, to the honour of his profession, and the comfort of his own soul: but the glory of it is still to be referred to me; *for separate from me you can do nothing*, though you stand in the foremost rank of my followers, and have already made some considerable attainments. And *if any one* that calls himself my disciple *does not* maintain such a regard to me, as that he may be said to *abide in*

5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is

[c] *That it may bring forth more fruit.*] This strongly suggests a very sublime and important thought, viz. that one of the noblest rewards God can bestow on former acts of obedience, is to make the soul yet more holy, and fit for farther and more eminent service, though it should be by such painful afflictions as resemble the *pruning of a vine.*

d *If*

is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

in me[d], *he is* rejected and *cast out* with disdain and abhorrence, *as a* fruitless *branch* lopped off from the vine, *and* by consequence *is* presently *withered; and* as [*men*] *gather* up such dry sticks, *and throw them into the fire, and* there *they are burnt*, as a worthless kind of wood fit for nothing but fuel (see Ezek. xv. 2—4), so in like manner such will be the end of those unhappy creatures; they shall be gathered as fit fuel for Divine wrath, and their external relation to me will not preserve them from everlasting burnings. SECT. CLXXV. John XV. 6.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

But as for you, my faithful servants, I assure you, for your encouragement, that, *if you* stedfastly *abide in me, and* take care that in consequence of it *my words abide in you*, so that you maintain a suitable regard to all my instructions, promises, and commands, this blessed union will entitle you to such signal degrees of the Divine favour, that *you shall ask* in prayer *whatsoever ye will, and*, if it be upon the whole subservient to your own happiness, and to the public good, *it shall be done for you*. And let it therefore be your care to make the suitable returns of gratitude and obedience; for *in this is my Father* most eminently *glorified, that you*, my apostles, *bring forth much fruit*, by exerting yourselves to the utmost for the propagation of my gospel in the world, and endeavouring to enforce your instructions by the holiness of your lives: *and* in this likewise *you shall* appear to all to *be my* true *disciples*, and to act worthy of your character and relation to me. 7 8

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

And it is surely with the highest reason I would engage you to make this your aim: because *as the Father has loved me, so have I* also *loved you*, with the most constant and invariable affection: *continue* therefore *in my love*, and always be solicitous so to behave, as may, on your part, maintain the friendship inviolate. And *if you* diligently and constantly *keep my commandments*, then *you will* assuredly *continue in my love; even as I have* always *kept my Father's commandments, and* so *continue in his love*; for this is the most solid evidence of it, which I give to my Father, and require from you. 9 10

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

These

d *If any one does not abide in me.*] It is strange that any should think this text a conclusive argument against the doctrine of *perseverance*; when *to be in Christ* (ver. 2) so plainly signifies *making an external profession of Christianity*, whether vain or sincere.

SECT. CLXXVI.

John XV. 16.

Remember that *you have not* first *chosen me, but I* by my sovereign and effectual grace *have chosen you* to the honourable office of my apostles and ambassadors; *and have* appointed and *ordained you, that you should go* and publish what you have heard from me to all the world, *and* be so qualified and assisted, that you may *bear* abundant *fruit* in the most distant countries, *and* [*that*] the blessed effect of *your fruit should continue* even to the remotest generations[c]: yea, I have also raised you to such a happy circumstance, and made you so eminently the favourites of heaven, *that*, as I lately told you (ver. 7), *whatever you shall ask the Father in my name, he may* perform it for you; and you may certainly depend upon it he will *give it you.*

16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

17 But then again I would remind you, that if you would continue thus the objects of these his gracious regards, you must carefully practise your duty to each other as well as to him; for *these things I command you, that ye love one another;* and this you should the rather do, as you will be the mark of common hatred and persecu-

17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

18 tion. Yet *if* you find *the world hate* and injure *you*, you have no reason to be offended or surprised at this; for *you know, that* mild and benevolent as my conduct has always been, yet *it has hated me* your Chief and Lord[d], *before* it discharged its venom and malignity on *you.*

18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you.

19 Indeed *if you were* like the rest *of the world*, and your doctrines and practice were conformable to its customs and maxims, *the world* is so generally under the power of selfish prejudices, that it undoubtedly *would love its own*, and you might expect much better treatment from it[e]: *but because* this

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world,

c *That you should go and bear fruit*, &c. This was a security to them that they should be preserved from immediate dangers, and that their life should be guarded by Providence till some considerable services had been accomplished by their means.—When *our Lord* adds, *that your fruit should continue*, he may allude to the custom of keeping rich and generous *wines* a great many years, so that in some cases (which was especially applicable to the sweet *eastern wines*) they might prove a cordial to those who were unborn when the grapes were produced. In this view there is a beautiful propriety in the representation, which I hope will be particularly felt when these reviving *chapters* are read.

d *It has hated me your chief.*] The words in the *original* (εμε πρωτον υμων μεμισηκεν), which we render, *It hated me before* it hated *you*, may (as Dr. *Lardner* well observes) be more literally rendered, *It hated me your Chief*; which makes the expression more lively and exactly parallel to Mat. x. 24, 25, sect lxxv. (See *Lord Credib.* part i. Vol. II. p. 693.) Thus ω πρωτῳ εἰμι εγω (1 Tim. i. 15.) is well translated, *of whom I am chief.*

e *If you were of the world, the world would love its own.*] This seems to me a strong intimation, that even in nations which profess Christianity, if true religion fall, as it very possibly may, to a very low ebb, they that exert themselves remarkably for the revival of it, must, on the very principle here laid down, expect hatred

world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

this is not your character, and *you are not* thus *of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world*, not only to separate from, but to oppose its vices and enormities, and even to be leaders in that holy and necessary opposition, it is no wonder that *upon this account the world hateth you*, though the cause in which you are engaged be indeed so honourable, and your lives so useful and beneficent.

SECT. CLXXVI.

John XV. 19.

20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

Remember, and recollect upon this occasion, *the word which I spake to you* some time ago (Mat. x. 24. and Luke vi. 40), and which I have but lately repeated (John xiii. 16), *The servant is not greater than his lord*, nor the messenger greater than him that sent him: *if* therefore *they have persecuted me*, and providence has permitted them to do it, you may reasonably conclude *they will also persecute you*, and cannot justly complain if you have your share of sufferings; and *if* you have seen that *they have* generally *kept my saying*, I will give you leave to suppose *they will also keep yours*[f]. 20

21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

But when you see, as you very quickly will, not only my doctrine rejected, but my person assaulted, abused, and murdered, it must be a sensible warning to you to prepare for the like usage; and *all these things they will* in fact *do to you for my name's sake, because they do not know him that sent me;* for their ignorance of that God to whom they boast so near a relation does indeed lie at the bottom of all their opposition to me. 21

22 If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but

And a dreadful account they will have to give for it; for *if I had not come and spoken* thus plainly *to them, they would* comparatively *have had* 22

hatred and opposition; and that the passages in *scripture* relating to *persecution* are not so peculiar to the *first ages*, or to Christians living in *idolatrous* countries, as some have supposed. Would to God, the malignity to be found in some of us against our brethren, did not too plainly illustrate this remark! Men will probably experience the truth of it, in proportion to the degeneracy of those around them, and to the vigour and resolution with which they bear their testimony against prevailing errors and vices. Yet it is certain, that the imprudence and bigotry of some very good men has sometimes made matters worse than they would otherwise have been, and perhaps has irritated the vices of their enemies, so as in part to have been accessary to their own damage, and the much greater mischief of those that have injured them.

[f] *If they have kept my saying*, &c.] I am surprised that such a multitude of learned *commentators*, and among the rest Gataker and Knatchbull, should contend that τηρειν λογον should here be understood of *observing a person's discourse* with a malignant design *to carp at it*. (See *Wolfius, in loc.*) Παραλαμβανειν has indeed that sense, Mark iii. 2. Luke vi. 7. xiv. 1. xx. 20.) But no certain argument can be drawn from hence, especially considering how constantly the *phrase* before us is taken in a good sense, for *an obedient regard*, in this very discourse, in which it often occurs. See John xiv. 15, 21, 23. xv. 10. xvii. 6.

SECT. CLXXVI.

had no sin[g]*; but now they have no excuse* or pretence *for their sin*, but, being committed against so clear and strong a light, it stands exposed in its most odious colours: Yea, it appears rebellion against God, as well as ingratitude to me; for *he that hateth* and opposeth *me*, *hateth* and opposeth *my Father also*, whose commission I bear[h]; and this is what they have done, after all reasonable methods have been taken for their conviction. If I had wrought no miracle at all, nay, *if I had not done among them such* extraordinary *works as no other man* ever *did*, not even their prophets, or Moses himself, *they had not had* any degree of *sin*, comparable to that which they are now under; *but now*, as they have rejected my superior miracles, which they have seen with their own eyes, at the same time that they own the evidence of those which Moses wrought, of which they have heard only by distant report, they manifest such an obstinate perverseness of temper, that I may truly say, *they have both seen, and hated both me and my Father*; and God himself will justly resent and punish it, as an indignity that shews their enmity to him. *But* [*this is all permitted*], *that the word which is written in their law*, or in their sacred volume, concerning David (Psal. xxxv. 19), *might* eminently *be fulfilled* in me, as many ancient prophecies foretold that it should, "*Surely they have hated me without a cause*[i]."

but now they have no cloak for their sin.

John XV. 23.

23 He that hateth me, hateth my Father also.

24

24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now they have both seen, and hated both me and my Father.

25

25 But *this cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom*, as I told you (chap. xiv. 26), *I will* shortly *send to you*

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto

[g] *They would have had no sin.*] It is so evident from the *word of God* (see Rom. i. 20, 21. and ii. 12—15), as well as from the *reason of things*, that *sin* may be imputed to those who have *no revelation*, that it is most evident this is only *a hebraism*; as when, according to the pathetic manner of speaking, especially in use among the *eastern* nations, that is said to be *nothing at all* which, when compared with something else, is *inconsiderably small*. See Psal. xxxix. 5. Isa. xl. 17. 1 Cor. i. 28. iii. 7. and compare John ix. 41.

[h] *Hateth my father also.*] How much it is to be wished that those who make light of Christ, while they pretend a great veneration for *the Father*, would seriously attend to this weighty admonition, *lest haply* they *be found even to fight against God!* (Acts v. 39.)

[i] *They have hated me without a cause.*] It appears to me very evident that Psal. xxxv. cannot be, strictly speaking, *a prophecy concerning the Messiah*, especially from ver. 13, 14, which represent a person incapable of helping others in their *sickness*, otherwise than *by fasting and prayer*, whereas Christ (and, so far as we can find, he alone) had a power of *working miracles whenever he pleased*. Nevertheless, that the enemies of the Messiah should *hate him without a cause* was expressly foretold (Isa. liii. 3—9. Dan. ix. 26. and Zech. xii. 10.) not to mention the argument arising from comparing all the places in which his *innocence* and *holiness are* described, with those which refer to his *sufferings*. So that I apprehend the turn given in the *paraphrase* sufficiently justified.

to you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

you from the Father, [even] the Spirit of truth, SECT. CLXXVI. *who proceeds from the Father,* and is to reside in my church, *he shall bear* a convincing *testimony to me,* to vindicate my character from all the infamy they are maliciously attempting to throw upon it. John XV. 26.

27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

And you also, weak as you now appear, *shall* by his powerful assistance *bear* a courageous and convincing *testimony* to me, *because you have been with me from the beginning* of my ministry, and therefore are the best qualified to give an account of my whole conduct; which the better it is known, the more it will justify my cause, and expose the wickedness of those that rise up against me. 27

IMPROVEMENT.

THE Son of God condescends to speak under the character of a *Friend;* and with what humble gratitude should we attend to his words! He lays aside the majesty of a sovereign to assume this more tender relation; and surely our overflowing hearts must inquire, blessed *Jesus,* what shall we do to express the friendship on our side? Let us observe what he has here declared, *Ye are my friends* indeed, *if ye do whatever I command you.* Lord, we *will run the way of thy commandments, when* on this noblest principle *thou shalt enlarge our hearts!* (Psal. cxix. 32.) Ver. 15, 14

He has *loved us* with an unexampled affection, which has approved itself *stronger than death;* and, in return, he requires us to *love one another.* How gracious a *command!* How merciful to our fellow-creatures and to ourselves, who should infallibly feel the benefit of the practice of it, both in the delight inseparable from benevolent affections, and in the circulation of kind and friendly offices, which, degenerate as human nature is, few are so abandoned as not to endeavour to repay! Who would not imagine that the whole *world* should feel and obey the charm? And yet, instead of this, behold, they *hate Christ,* and his servants *for his sake,* though *without a cause,* and against the strongest engagements. Miserable creatures! who by a necessary consequence, whatever they may fondly imagine, *hate the Father also,* and stand daily and hourly exposed to all the dreadful terrors of an almighty enemy. 12, 13 — 18, 25 — 23, 24

Let us not wonder *if the world hate us;* nor greatly regard if it injure us. *We are not of the world,* nor *is the servant greater than his lord:* but surely the opposition which the gospel brings along with it, is nothing when compared with those blessings which it entails on all who faithfully embrace it. Were the sufferings 19, 20

SECT. CLXXVI.

Ver. ferings and difficulties a thousand times greater than they are, we ought to esteem *the Pearl of price*, the most happy purchase at any rate; and to be daily returning our most thankful acknowledgments, that *Christ* sent forth *his apostles*, qualified with such a knowledge of himself, and assisted by such power from his Spirit,
26 *appointing them to go and bring forth fruit*, even *fruit* which *should remain* to the remotest ages. Through his guardian care it still remains in the world: Oh may it flourish more abundantly among us! and may its efficacy on our hearts and lives be more apparent! And may Divine Grace convince those who now reject and oppose it, that in the midst of such various evidence of
22 his having *come and spoken to them, they have no cloak for their sin!* but with whatever fond excuses they may amuse themselves and others, it will quickly appear, that *the bed is too short to stretch themselves on it, and the covering too narrow to wrap themselves in.* (Isa. xxviii. 20.)

SECT. CLXXVII.

Christ warns his disciples of the sufferings they must expect, and labours to reconcile them to the thoughts of his remove, as what would on the whole be advantageous to them, as the occasion of sending the Spirit, which would be so great a support to them and their cause. John XVI. 1—15.

JOHN XVI. 1.

SECT. CLXXVII.

John XVI. 1.

CHRIST farther added in his discourse to his disciples, *These things I have spoken to you* concerning the opposition which you are to expect from the world, and the proportionable supports you will receive from the Spirit, *that* when the storm arises, *you may not be offended* and discouraged, and much less be drawn to renounce your profession, in order to avoid the
2 danger. *They shall* indeed excommunicate, or *cast you out of the synagogues; yea*, that is not all, for *the hour is* shortly *coming, that whosoever killeth you*[a], *shall think that he offers* [*an acceptable*]

JOHN XVI. 1.

THESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you,

[a] *Whosoever killeth you.*] As the *lower kinds of excommunication* among the Jews were attended only with *separation from synagogue worship*, and from familiar converse (Luke vi. 22), or, in cases of greater guilt, with confiscation of goods and *forfeiture of all their substance* (Ezra x. 8), the *highest kind* of it was *a capital sentence* (Lev. xxvii. 29); the execution of which, when regularly pronounced, was indeed an act of duty and obedience to God, while they had the *power of life and death* in their hands: but after it was wrested from them some might perhaps think it an act of very acceptable piety and zeal to attempt such *executions*, though at the hazard of their own lives (of which the *forty conspirators* against Paul do therefore so boldly avow a design, even to

SECT. CLXXVII.

John XVI. 3.

you, will think that he doth God service.

3 And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

4 But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

5 But now I go my way to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?

6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart.

able] *service to God*[b]: to so mad a rage shall their zeal arise, and so thick is the darkness with which their minds are veiled. *And* all *these* cruel *things they will do unto you, because they have not known either the Father, or me:* which if they had done, instead of injuring me, and exercising such inhumanities towards you, my apostles, they would have received us with the greatest pleasure and thankfulness. *But I have* 4 *spoken these things* plainly *to you*, and forewarned you of them, *that when the season comes* in which they shall happen, *you may remember that I told you of them*; and so may turn what has so discouraging an aspect into a further confirmation of your faith. *And I did not* indeed *say these things to you from the beginning* of my ministry *because I was* then *with you*, and could easily suggest proper instructions and consolations, as new circumstances of difficulty arose: *But now* I speak them, because 5 *I am* departing from you for a while, and am *going away to him that sent me*, into the world; *and* yet *none of you asketh me, Whither dost thou go?* nor is concerned to make those inquiries about that better world where we are to dwell together, which surely might well become you in such a circumstance. *But because* 6 *I have spoken these things unto you*, and talked of leaving you for a time, your natural affections have been greatly moved, and *sorrow has filled* and pierced *your* very *hearts*, so that you seem almost stupified with it.

But

to the high priest, as if it were meritorious rather than criminal; (Acts xxii. 14, 15). And to such sort of facts these words of *our Lord* may peculiarly relate.—Permit me to digress so far as to add, that I apprehend, in other cases, after they were thus disarmed of the *power of life and death*, they had (as I may elsewhere prove) a dependance upon the *interposition of providence* to add that efficacy to their censures which their power, infringed as it was, could not give: in reference to which this *highest sentence of excommunication* was in the decline of their state called *Anathema Maran-atha*, or a sentence which *the Lord would* remarkably *come* to execute, though they themselves could not carry it into effect. St. Paul therefore, with a peculiar beauty and propriety (but never, so far as I can find, fully explained), applies it to *a crime* not capable of conviction before any human judges; even the *want* of a sincere *love to Christ*, though under a Christian profession. See 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

b *Shall think that he offers* [*an acceptable*] *service to God.*] The words λατρειαν προσφερειν τω Θεω might (as Abp. *Leighton* observes) be rendered, *offers an oblation* or sacrifice *to God*. This intimates, as that excellent man glosses on the text (*Serm.* xvii. p. 302. that "the *servants of Christ*, should be considered, not only *as sheep for the slaughter*, but *as sheep for the altar* to." The rage of persecuting enemies, and, beyond all comparison, *the murders* committed by *papal* cruelty *in the name of the Lord*, in their *hecatombs of whole burnt-offerings*, (if I may be allowed an expression which falls so far short of the dreadful truth,) too justly illustrate the remark. But how God will resent *the murder of his children* upon his *altar*, the day *when he makes inquisition for blood* will declare.

c *He*

SECT. LXXVII.

John XVI. 7.

But I tell you the exact *truth* of the case, when I say that *it is* on the whole *advantageous to you*, as well as proper for me, *that I should go away*, considering the agreement made between the Father and me in the counsel of peace between us; *for if I do not go away*, and appear in heaven under the character of the great High-Priest, *the Comforter will not come to you*, since the gift of the Spirit is the fruit of my purchase, and is appointed to be consequent upon my being glorified, (John vii. 39. sect. ci.) *but when I go* from hence, *I will* not fail to *send him to you*. *And when he comes, he will* abundantly display the efficacy of his grace, not only in the comforts he will give you under all your troubles, but in the wonderful success with which he will enable you to carry on my cause; and will effectually *convince the world*, by your ministry[c], *of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment*. He will convince the world *of* that aggravated *sin* which they are guilty of, *because they do not believe in me*; to the truth of whose mission he will bear an unanswerable testimony by his enlightening influences and miraculous operations. He will convince them *of* my *righteousness* and innocency; *because* it will evidently appear that *I go to my Father*, and am accepted of him, when I send the Spirit from him in so glorious a manner, (compare Acts ii. 33. and Rom. i. 4.) *and* that my righteousness may therefore be relied on for the justification and acceptance of my people, since *you see me no more* appearing among you in the form of a servant, but are assured that, having finished what I was to do on earth, I am taken up to heaven, and received into glory. *And* he will convince them *of* my being invested with the power of executing *judgment; because the prince of this world*, the great head of the apostacy, *is* now as it were already *judged* and condemned, and shall then be triumphed over in a very remarkable manner, when his oracles are silenced and he is cast out from many persons, and countries too, which he before possessed: (compare John xii. 31. sect. cxlviii.) And Satan being thus divested of his power, my gospel shall be propagated

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more:

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

c *He will convince the world.*] So the word ελεγξει properly signifies. Compare John viii. 9. 46. 1 Cor. xiv. 24. Tit. i. 9. and Jam. ii. 9.—For the illustration of this, and the following *verses*, see Archbishop *Tillotson's Works*, Vol. III. p. 287—289.

d *But*

SECT. CLXXVII.

John XVI. 11

propagated through the world, and a full proof at length be given of my sovereign authority, in my coming to execute judgment upon all ungodly sinners.

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

I have yet many other *things to say to you,* with relation to matters of considerable moment in the settlement of my church; *but* I wave them at present, because I know that *you are not able to bear* [*them*] *now,* and are not yet prepared to receive them [d]. 12

13 Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

But when he, [*even*] *the Spirit of truth, is come,* according to the promise I have given you, *he,* as a faithful Guide, *will lead you into all* necessary *truth: for he will not* exceed his commission, and, like a careless or unfaithful messenger, *speak* merely *of himself; but,* like a wise and good Ambassador, *whatsoever he shall hear* and receive in charge, [*that*] *will he speak; and he will shew you things to come* as far as may be necessary to prepare and qualify you for the great work you shall be called to: and will acquaint you with future events, the prediction of which, as delivered by you, may be a lasting testimony to the truth of my gospel. 13

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

And *he shall* indeed *glorify me* in the most signal manner; *for he will take of mine,* or of those doctrines which relate to me, and those benefits which I procure and bestow, *and will* reveal and *shew* [*it*] *to you,* in the most clear and attractive light. 14

15 All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

And indeed *all things whatsoever the Father hath are mine;* and *therefore,* to express the whole system of evangelical truth, *I said* unto you, *that he will take of mine, and will shew* [*it*] *to you;* since whatsoever he reveals to you in the name of God may be called mine, as all truth proceeds from me, and all real goodness is my cause and interest in the world. 15

IMPROVEMENT.

How great is the ignorance and folly of them that *persecute* their brethren *in the name of the Lord,* and *kill* his dear children under Ver. 2

[d] *But you are not able to bear them now.*] Those *other things* to which *our Lord* refers might probably relate to the abrogation of the *ceremonial law,* to the doctrine of *justification by faith,* the rejection of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, and the like; which might have given some *offence* to the disciples, till their remaining prejudices, were removed. However, the *prudence of Christ,* in this respect is an excellent pattern for *ministers*; and we had need to pray earnestly for the instructions and assistances of the Spirit of God, that we may neither forget nor abuse it.

SECT. CLXXVII. under the *pretence of offering him* an acceptable *sacrifice!* Thus were the *apostles* treated by those that *knew not* the God for whom they professed all this burning zeal. Let us bless God that we are providentially sheltered from those effects of it which might otherwise bear so hard upon us: and let us diligently watch over our hearts, that no irregular affections may work there, and no uncharitable sentiments be harboured. When, like the *apostles*, our *hearts* are *filled with sorrow* let us be cautious that they may not be *stupified* by it, so that any call of duty should pass unheard or any opportunity of religious advancement unimproved; and let us not be indolent in our *inquiries* into the meaning of those dispensations which we do not understand; but seriously consider whether we are not *sorrowful* for that which is indeed designed for our *advantage*, and in the issue will be matter of *rejoicing* to us.

We hear to what purposes *the Comforter* was *sent*. His *coming* was designed in a peculiar manner for the *advantage* of the *apostles*; and was of greater service to them than the continuance of *Christ's* presence with them in the body would have been, not only to support and *comfort* them under all their *trials*, but to acquaint them with *all* necessary *truth*, and fully to instruct them in the mysteries of godliness. And he *came* also for the *conviction* of an *apostate* world; for the important errand he was sent upon was to awaken men's minds, and to *convince them* of their own guilt, and of *Christ's righteousness*, and of that awful *judgment* which should be executed on the most inveterate of his enemies. Let us often think of the force of the *Spirit's testimony* to the truth of *Christianity*, and endeavour to understand it in all its extent. Let us bless God that the gospel, and the character of his Son, were thus vindicated; and rejoice in the views of that complete conquest, to which *Satan* is already adjudged. In the mean time let us earnestly pray that the influences of the *Holy Spirit* may be communicated to us in such a manner that *Christ* may be *glorified* in us, and we in him; and that the *things of Christ* may be *taken, and shewn to us* by that *Spirit*; for it can only be done by means of *his* influence and operations.

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5, 6

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9, 10, 11

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SECT. CLXXVIII.

Our Lord concludes his discourse with assuring his disciples that his separation from them would not be final, but that he would still act in their favour as their Guardian, and make them finally victorious. John XVI. 16. *to the end.*

SECT. CLXXVIII. John XVI. 16.

OUR Lord continued and concluded this excellent discourse to his apostles in words

John XVI. 16. A Little while and ye shall not see me: and

to

and again, a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

to the following purpose: It is yet but *a little while, and you shall not see me* any more conversing with you upon earth, as I have hitherto done: *and* yet *again*, for your encouragement and comfort, I assure you that it is but *a little while* longer, *and you shall see me* again, on terms of much greater advantage, *because I go to the Father*; plainly intimating thereby that he would be so mindful of their interest with the Father, as ere long to bring them to an eternal abode with him [a].

SECT. CLXXVIII. John XVI. 16.

17 Then said *some* of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, a little while and ye shall not see me; and again, a little while and ye shall see me; and because I go to the Father?

But their thoughts were so taken up about other things, and they had still such expectations of his establishing an earthly kingdom, that, notwithstanding what he now had said was far from being obscure, they did not at first penetrate into the meaning of it: *[some] of his disciples therefore said one to another, What is this that he says to us? A little while and ye shall not see me; and again, a little while and ye shall see me*; *and* why does he add, *Because I go to the Father? They said therefore* among themselves. *What is this little while of which he speaks? we know not what he says*, and cannot apprehend what he means by it. 17

18 They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith. 18

Now

[a] Intimating—he would bring them to an eternal abode, &c.] As this sense is evidently much more important, so it appears to me more natural and easy than that of Mons. Le Clerc, who understands it as if Christ had said, "Though I am quickly to disappear from you, and be lodged in the grave, I shall soon come again, and make you another visit of some length, before I return to heaven by my ascension." His *going to the Father* was no proof of *this*, though it strongly proved his ability to introduce them to the heavenly world. I apprehend that the whole *joy* which *Christ's resurrection and ascension*, as connected with each other, gave them, is referred to in the following discourse, which therefore is so *paraphrased* as to include all that is pertinent and material in the explication above.

[b] *What is this that he says*, &c.] There are so many passages in the preceding parts of this discourse which relate to *Christ's going to his Father*, (chap. xiv. 2, 12, 28. xv. 26. xvi. 10) that it is a strange instance of the dulness of the *apostles* that they did not understand him here. Perhaps it is recorded on purpose to shew what an alteration the Spirit afterwards made in them.—It is indeed difficult to imagine what could perplex them, unless it were that they suspected the words, *A little while and ye shall not see me; and again, a little while and ye shall see me*, &c. might intimate that after he had *gone to the Father*, and made a short stay there, he would *come again*, and settle an *earthly kingdom*; and they might desire an explication in this view. Accordingly, after having told them that, though they were *sorrowful* he would come and *see them again* after his resurrection (ver. 20, 22.) and would introduce them to a state of comfortable converse with God by *prayer*, and *a joy of which none should deprive them*, (ver. 23—27, he adds, (ver. 28.) that he was quickly *leaving the world*, to go and reside with *the Father, from whom he came*; thereby gently intimating that no *temporal reign* was to be expected. And if we suppose him thus to have glanced obliquely at the most secret sentiments of their hearts, it will account for that confession of his *omniscience* which immediately follows this 28th verse (ver. 29, 30.) the reason of which would not appear merely from his discovery that they *doubted* about something which their countenances and whispers might shew.

[c] Ye

SECT. CLXXVIII.

John XVI. 19.

Now Jesus, as the secret workings of their hearts were open to his view, *knew that they were desirous to ask him* for some farther explication of what he had been saying, and yet that they were afraid of being upbraided for the slowness of their apprehensions; and therefore kindly prevented their confusion, *and said to them, Do you inquire of one another concerning this which I said, A little while and ye shall not see me, and again, a little while and ye shall see me?* Surely, if you reflect a little, it cannot be very 20 difficult to understand the meaning of that. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall* shortly *weep and lament* for a while, on account of my being taken away from you[c], *and* in the mean time, *the world shall rejoice*, as if it had prevailed against me; *and you shall be sorrowful* at the loss of my presence, *but* then you have this to comfort you in that interval of distress, that *your* 21 *sorrow shall* quickly *be turned into joy.* Just as *a woman when she is in labour, has* great anxiety and *sorrow because her hour* of distress and agony *is come; but when she has brought forth a child, she* forgets the pangs she endured, and *remembereth* [*her*] *tribulation no more, for joy that a man is born into the world*, and added to her family 22 for its future honour and support. *And so* it is, that *you indeed have sorrow now*, in expectation of the melancholy scene which is approaching; and it will very much increase your trouble to see me in a few hours more torn away from you with inhuman violence, hung as a malefactor on the cross, and buried in the grave; *but* when your hopes are at the lowest ebb, *I will* quickly *see you again*, after my resurrection, *and your hearts shall rejoice; and* afterwards, though I am absent from you in the body, yet I will fill you with such consolation by my Spirit, that *no one shall*, by any means whatever, *deprive you of your joy*, which shall sweetly mingle itself even with your heaviest afflictions[d].

19 Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while and ye shall see me?

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

21 A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

22 And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man taketh from you.

And

c *Ye shall weep and lament*, &c.] Whatever immediate reference this may have to the *sorrows* of the *apostles*, immediately on the *death of Christ*, before his *resurrection*, I question not but it includes all their subsequent afflictions *in the days of fasting, when the bridegroom* was *taken away from them*, as it is elsewhere expressed in a parallel phrase, (Mat. ix. 15.) which must express much more than the *abstinence* of the *one day* he lay in the grave, supposing (which is very possible) they had then but little relish to their food. See Vol. VI. p. 373

d *No one shall deprive you of your joy.*] As this promise will be for ever accomplished to all Christ's faithful servants, so it is observable how the apostle Paul, in his more abundant afflictions, attests his experience of its truth, when he says, As

sorrowful,

SECT. CLXXVIII.

John XVI. 23.

23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing: verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you.

And in that day, when I have sent the Comforter, *you shall not inquire any thing of me*[e], nor be puzzled with much greater difficulties than those which I have now been explaining; but Divine illuminations shall be poured in upon you in the richest abundance, and with it the spirit of earnest and successful prayer; for *verily, verily, I say unto you*, and repeat the important assurance which I before gave you (chap. xiv. 13, 14, and xv. 16), *That whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give* [*it*] *you.*

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

Hitherto ye have not been used to regard me under the character of a Mediator between God and man, and therefore have *asked nothing in my name;* but then, having received a fuller revelation of the doctrine of my intercession, you may come with a cheerful boldness to the throne of grace, and freely *ask* whatever shall be necessary for you; *and* depend upon it *you shall receive* such a liberal supply, *that*, in the midst of all your temporal discouragements, *your joy* in God *may* still *be* maintained in its *full* height. 24

25 These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

These weighty and important *things I have* often *spoken to you in* the obscurity of *parables*, which have appeared dark and mysterious to you; *but the hour* or time *is coming when I will speak no more to you in parables* or dark sayings *but I will tell you what relates to the Father with* all openness and *plainness* of speech. 25

26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you:

In that day you shall ask in my name, and shall present your supplications to the Father with an express acknowledgment of your dependance upon me for the success of your petitions; *and I do not* merely *say to you, that I will ask the Father on your account*, and plead with him for the acceptance of your prayers, though you may assure yourselves that I shall always be ready to do it; 26

27 For the Father himself loveth you, because

But I represent it not to you in such a view, as if every favour were obtained and as it were extorted, merely by my importunity, from one who 27

sorrowful, yet always rejoicing (2 Cor. vi. 10); and mentions his share in the *joy of Christians* as a most important and sacred *oath.* (1 Cor. xv. 31.)

e *You shall not inquire any thing of me.*] We render it *ask;* but I thought it proper to make some distinction between ἐρωτᾶω, which properly signifies to *make an inquiry*, and αἰτέω, which is to *present a request.* (See Dr. *Calamy on the Trinity*, p. 154.) Yet I confess the former is sometimes used almost in the same sense with the latter (see Mat. xvi. 1); and the word seems to have the same ambiguity with *demand* in English.—The argument some have drawn from hence against *praying to Christ*, on the preceding criticism, has no appearance of weight; and did ἐρωτᾶω signify *to pray*, would prove (if it proved any thing) that Paul lived, and Stephen died, in a very unwarrantable, and perhaps an idolatrous, practice.

SECT. CLXXVIII.

who has himself no regard for your happiness; *for*, on the contrary, I assure you, that *the Father himself* most tenderly *loves you*, and there-
John XVI. 27. fore will be ready to grant your requests, and to watch over you with paternal affection and care; *because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God*, as the messenger of his grace to men; and have accordingly relied upon me with such stedfastness, that you
28 have ventured your all upon that belief. And you have therein acted a very prudent and happy part; for *I* indeed *came out from the Father, and am come into the world* to scatter a Divine light upon it, and to conduct men into the paths of life and peace: and now *again*, having dispatched my errand, *I am leaving the world, and am going* back *to the Father*; where I shall keep my stated abode, and whither I will shortly conduct you to a more glorious kingdom than you ever expected here. This is the sum of what I have been telling you, and was particularly my meaning in what I have said before (ver. 16), "Yet a little while, and ye shall see me again, because I go to the Father."

because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

29 And *his disciples*, struck with the correspondence of what he said to what was secretly passing in their own minds, *said to him*, Lord, *Behold, now thou speakest* very *plainly* to us, *and usest no parable*, or obscure form of expression; so that we clearly understand thy meaning, and
30 rejoice in it. *And now we know* by this farther token, even thy discerning our inmost doubts on this head, *that thou knowest all things, and hast no need that any one should ask thee* any particular questions, to inform thee of those scruples which thou seest when first rising in the mind: *on this account* therefore *we* firmly *believe that thou camest out from God.*

29 His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.

30 Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

31 *Jesus answered them, Do you now* at length *believe?* and do you apprehend your faith to be so firm, that nothing shall be able any more to shake it? Let me advise you not to be too confident; for I assure you, that in a very little time you will be found to act, as if you had not any faith in me: pray therefore, that God would fortify you against those trials of which I have
32 warned you once and again. For *behold, the hour is coming, yea*, is so near at hand, that I may even say, it *is now come, that you shall* all *be scattered* and dispersed, and *every one* of you return

31 Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?

32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave

leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

return *to your own* habitations and employments, or otherwise shift for yourselves as well as you can; *and* to consult your own security, you *shall* flee away and *leave me alone;* but *yet I am not,* properly speaking, *alone, for the Father is with me,* and he will comfort and support me, in the absence of all human friends. SECT. CLXXVIII. John XVI. 32.

33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

These things have I spoken thus largely *to you* 33
that whatever difficulties may arise in life, having been thus warned, and furnished with such consolations as these, *you might have* lasting *peace* and serenity of soul by the exercise of your faith *in me. In the world* indeed *you shall have* and must expect *affliction; but be courageous* and cheerful in your combat, for *I have* myself *overcome the world;* and, being possessed of a power infinitely superior to it, I will make you partakers in my victory over all its terrors and its snares.

IMPROVEMENT.

WE are, perhaps, often regretting the *absence* of *Christ,* and Ver.
looking back with emulation on the happier lot of those who 16
conversed with him on earth in the days of his flesh: but if we are true *believers* in an *unseen Jesus,* it is but *a little while and we shall* also *see him;* for he *is gone to the Father,* and will so successfully negociate our affairs there, that whatever our present difficulties and sorrows are, they shall end more happily than those of a *woman,* who after all the pangs and throes of her *la-* 21
bour, through the merciful interposition of Divine Providence, is made the *joyful mother of a living child.*

In the mean time, we have surely no reason to envy *the world* 20
its *joys* and triumphs: alas, its season of *weeping* will quickly come! But *our lamentations* are soon to be *turned into songs of praise,* and *our hearts* to be filled with that solid, sacred and peculiar *joy,* 22
which, being the gift of *Christ,* can *never be taken away.*

While we are in this state of distance and darkness, let us re- 23
joice that we have *access* to the *throne of grace* through the prevailing *name of Christ.* Let us come thither with holy courage and confidence, and *ask* that we may *receive;* and so our *joy may be full.* With what pleasure may we daily renew our visits *to* 24
that throne, before which *Jesus* stands as an Intercessor; to *that throne,* which is possessed by *the Father,* who *himself loveth* us, 26, 27.
and answers with readiness and delight those *petitions* which are thus recommended! May our *faith in Christ,* and our *love to him,*

SECT. CLXXVIII. be still on the increasing hand; and our *supplications* will be more and more acceptable to him, whose *loving-kindness is better than life!* (Psal. lxiii. 3.)

—27

Surely we shall be frequently reviewing these gracious *discourses* which *Christ* has bequeathed us as an invaluable legacy. May they dwell with us in all our solitude, and comfort us in every distress! We shall have no reason to wonder if human friendship be sometimes false, and always precarious: the *disciples of Christ* were *scattered* in the day of his extremity, and *left him alone*, when they were under the highest obligations to have adhered to him with the most inviolable fidelity. May we but be able like him to say, that our *Father is with us;* and that delightful converse with God, which we may enjoy in our most solitary moments, will be a thousand times more than an equivalent for whatsoever we lose in the creatures. *In the world* we must indeed *have tribulation;* and he that has appointed it for us, knows that it is fit we should: but since *Jesus, the Captain of our salvation*, who was *made perfect through sufferings*, has *overcome the world*, and disarmed it; let us seek that *peace* which he has established, and press on with a *cheerful assurance*, that the least of his followers shall share in the honours and benefits of *his victory*.

33—32

33

SECT. CLXXIX.

Christ offers up a solemn prayer to the Father, that he himself might be glorified; and that those who were given him might be kept through his name. John XVII. 1—12.

JOHN XVII. 1.

SECT. CLXXIX. John XVII. 1. OUR Lord *Jesus spake these words* which are recorded in the preceding chapters, *and* then *lifted up his eyes to heaven*, and poured out a most affectionate and important prayer to his Father; an excellent model of his intercession in heaven, and a most comfortable and edifying representation of his temper both towards God and his people. And, that it might more effectually answer these great ends, he uttered it with an audible voice, *and said*, O my heavenly *Father*, *the* appointed and expected *hour is come* in which I am to enter on my sufferings, and to complete the work for which I came into the world; and therefore I pray, that thou wouldest *glorify* me, *thy Son*, in those signal appearances for my honour and support in death, in my recovery from the grave, and mine ascension into heaven, which

JOHN XVII. 1.

THESE words spake Jesus; and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.

SECT. CLXXIX.

John XVII. 1.

which thou hast promised to me, and which I know that thou wilt punctually fulfil[a]; *that thy Son also* in the whole series of his conduct, both in this world, and in that to which he is now returning, *may* successfully *glorify thee*, and accomplish the purposes of thy saving love; *According as thou hast*, by the engagements of thy covenant, *given him* that *power over all flesh*, that absolute dominion over all the human race, which he will ere long receive and exert; *that he may give eternal life to all that thou hast given him* by that covenant to be redeemed and saved. *And this is* the sure way to that *eternal life*[b], even *that they may know thee*, who art *the only* living and *true God*, in opposition to the idols they have ignorantly worshipped; *and* may know also and believe in *Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent* into the world as the only Saviour: and to this therefore thou wilt bring them, and wilt make use of what I have already done, and shall yet farther do, as the means of effecting it.

2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

It is with unutterable pleasure that I now reflect upon it, O my Father and my God, that *I have* eminently *glorified thee on earth* during the whole of my abode here; that I have been faithful to the trust that was reposed in me, in all that I have said and done through the course of my ministry: and greatly do I rejoice, that *I have* now gone so far, as to be just upon the point of having *finished*, by my sufferings and death, *the* important *work which thou gavest me to do. And now* therefore, *O* my heavenly *Father, do thou glorify me with thine own self, with the* original *glory which I had with thee before the world was* created[c], and which for the salvation of thy people

4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

[a] *Glorify thy Son.*] All the circumstances of *glory* attending the sufferings of Christ; as, the appearance of the *angel* to him in the garden, his striking down to the ground those that came to apprehend him, his curing the ear of Malchus, his good confession before Pilate, his extorting from that unjust judge a testimony of his innocence, the dream of *Pilate's wife*, the conversion of the *penitent robber*, the astonishing constellation of virtues and graces which shone so bright in Christ's dying behaviour, the supernatural *darkness*, and all the other *prodigies* that attended his *death*: as well as his *resurrection*, and *ascension*, and *exaltation* at God's right hand, and the mission of the *Holy Spirit*, and the consequent *success* of the gospel; are all to be looked upon as an *answer* to *this prayer*.

[b] *This is eternal life.*] Christ might insert this clause (though neither a petition, plea, nor any other part of *prayer*) on purpose to remind his *apostles* of the importance of their office; as they were sent to spread that knowledge which he here calls *eternal life*, because the eternal happiness of men depends upon it.

[c] *The glory which I had with thee before the world was.*] To suppose, with the Socinians, that this refers only to *that glory* which God intended for him in his *decrees*; or, with Mr. *Fleming*, that it refers only, or chiefly, to his being *clothed with the Shekinah*

SECT. CLXXIX.

people I have for a while laid aside, that I might clothe myself in this humble form.

John XVII. 6. *I have manifested thy name*, and revealed the glory of thy power and grace, *to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world: they were* originally *thine*, the creatures of thine hand, and the happy objects of thy sovereign choice[d]; *and* in consequence of thy gracious purposes *thou gavest them to me*, that they might be instructed and sanctified, and formed for the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world: *and* such accordingly has been the influence of my doctrine on their hearts, that *they have* readily embraced it, and hitherto have resolutely *kept* 7 and retained *thy word* and gospel. And, notwithstanding the mean appearance I have made to an eye of sense, their faith has owned me through this dark cloud and even *now*, in this my humble state, *they have* perceived and *known*, *that all things whatsoever* which I have said and done, and all the credentials which *thou hast* in fact *given me*, and which so many overlook, *are* indeed *of thee;* and that I am truly what I profess myself to be, a Divine Messenger to the children of men, and the Saviour that was pro- 8 mised to come into the world. This plainly appears to be their firm persuasion: *for the words which thou gavest to me, I have given to them*, I have revealed already much of my gospel to them, and begun to deposit it in their hands; *and* in the midst of great discouragement and opposition, giving attention to the words I spake, *they have received* [*them*] with faith and love, *and* made it manifest by their embracing and adhering to my doctrine, that they *have known in truth* the divinity of my mission, so as to be fully satisfied in their own minds *that I came out from thee* with a commission to reveal thy will (compare John xvi. 27, 30); *and* while I have been rejected by an ungrateful world, they have regarded me as the true Messiah, and have shewn they *have believed that thou didst* indeed *send me* on the great errand of their salvation.

6 I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.

7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee.

8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

I

kinah, seems to sink and contract the sense far short of its genuine purpose. See *Fleming's Christology*, Vol. II. p. 247, and *Whitby in loc.*

d *They were* originally *thine.*] There can surely be no reason to imagine from the sacred story, that the *apostles* were *chosen* to their great office on account of any extraordinary degrees of piety and virtue previous to their being called to follow Christ. So that I can see no natural sense of these words but what I have expressed in the *paraphrase*. Compare John xv. 16, p. 318.

e *And*

SECT. CLXXIX.

John XVII. 9.

9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.

I therefore pray for them, who have attended me as my apostles, and for all those who are, or shall be, brought to the same faith and the same temper, that thou wouldest support them under every trial, and wouldest regard them in a peculiar manner as the objects of thy care: *I pray not* thus *for the* unbelieving *world, but for those whom thou hast* graciously *given me*, and I am confident that my prayer for them shall not be in vain; *for they are* not only mine, but *thine* too, chosen by thy grace, and devoted to thy service. *And* indeed *all mine* interests, and my people *are thine, and thine are* also *mine; and* while thy glory is advanced by their establishment, *I* likewise *am*, and finally shall be, *glorified in them:* so near and intimate is our relation to each other; so sincere and active thy paternal affection to me, O my heavenly Father, and my filial duty to thee.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*.

And now I am to continue *no longer in the world; but these* my faithful servants *are* yet *in the world, and* some of them are to remain a considerable time in it, exposed to various hardships and dangers: whereas *I* (delightful thought!) shall soon have done with this weary wilderness, and *am coming to thee*, who art the centre of my soul, and the supreme object of my complacency and desire[e]. But while I am separated from these my servants, so dear to thee and to me, vouchsafe, O *holy Father*, to *keep these whom thou hast* thyself *given me*, and let them be preserved *through thy name;* let them be kept in safety by thy mighty power, and be established in the faith by a constant regard to thee, and a sense of thy presence impressed on their hearts; *that they* may still continue united to us, and to each other, in cordial affection, and *may be one, even as we* [*are*] one. Do not, O gracious Father, forget these my friends, in whose cause I have so affectionately engaged; for thou art witness, that *while I was with them in the world I kept them in thy name*, and through the influences of thy grace; [*yea*], *I guarded them*

12 While I was with them in the world I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me

[e] *And I am coming to thee.*] It is very plain that *this clause* could not be intended as an additional argument to introduce the following petition; for *Christ's coming to the Father* was the great security of his people: but it seems rather to be a short reflection on that dear subject, so familiar to his mind, with which he for a moment refreshed himself in the course of this humble and pathetic address. This I have endeavoured to represent in the *paraphrase*.

sect. clxxix.

John XVII. 12

them whom thou gavest me with a most constant care, *and none of them is lost, unless it be* counted as a kind of exception, that *the son of perdition* perishes by his iniquity[f]; that wretched creature, who in a lower sense was indeed given to me, but never, like the rest, was taken under my special care; but is left to fall into deserved ruin[g], *that the scripture might be fulfilled*, which foretold it as the dreadful consequence of his treachery. (See Psal. cix. 8, & seq. compared with Acts i. 20.)

me, I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition: that the scripture might be fulfilled.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1 WITH pleasure let us behold our gracious *Redeemer* in this posture of humble adoration; *lifting up his eyes* to God with solemn devotion, and pouring out his pious and benevolent Spirit in those Divine breathings which are here recorded. From his example, let us learn to *pray*; and from his intercession, to *hope*. We know *that the Father heareth him always* (John xi. 42); and singularly did he manifest that he heard him now, by all that bright assemblage of *glories* which shone around him in the concluding scenes of his abode on earth, and in those that attended his removal from it

[f] *Unless it be the son of perdition.*] I am surprised that so many very learned *divines*, and amongst the rest, even Bishop *Burnet* himself (whom I cannot mention but with the greatest honour), should so roundly infer from these words, that the *giving to Christ*, in the preceding clauses, cannot imply *an election to glory*, since it is here intimated that Judas, who perished, was *given* as well as the rest. (See *Burnet on the Articles*, p. 160.) The objection to a mere *English reader* might appear unanswerable; but those so conversant in the *original* might easily have observed, that if this text will prove that Judas was in the number of those *given to Christ*, in the same manner Luke iv. 26, 27. will prove, directly contrary to plain fact and the whole tenor of the argument, that the *woman of Sarepta* was a *widow in Israel*, and *Naaman the Syrian* a *leper in Israel* too; John iii. 13. that *Christ ascended into heaven* before he began his ministry; Rev. ix. 4. that the *men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads*, were either grass or *trees*; and Rev. xxi. 27. that there are some of the most *abominable* of mankind whose names *are written in the book of life*. See also Mat. v. 15. xii. 4. 1 Cor. vii. 5. 2 Cor. xii. 13. In all which places, as well as the preceding, it is plain that εἰ μὴ is not used strictly as an *exceptive particle*; and that if it has any thing like that force, it is only to intimate that what it introduces may, in a less proper sense, be reduced to the number of things mentioned before it. And this I take to be its precise sense in this text; for which reason I render it [*unless it be*,] though in some of the former instances it has not so much signification as that; but is used with as great a liberty, as [*except*] by Milton, when he says of Satan,

> ——God and his Son *except*,
> Created thing nought valued he nor shunn'd.

Thus likewise ἐαν μη is used, Gal. ii. 16. John v. 19. xv. 4.——The words before us might indeed refer to the *apostles*, (compare John xviii. 8, 9. sect. clxxviii.) but I do not see any necessity of *confining* them to Christ's care for their preservation, for the reason given above.

[g] Is left to fall into deserved ruin.] The *son of perdition* signifies one who *deservedly perishes*: as *a son of death* (2 Sam. xii. 5.) *children of hell* (Mat. xxiii. 15.) and *children of wrath* (Eph. ii. 3.) signify persons *justly obnoxious to death, hell*, and *wrath*.

it: and in all this too did the blessed *Jesus* manifest his zeal for the *glory of the Father*. May we emulate that holy temper! and when we *pray* even for *our own* consummate *happiness* in the heavenly world, may we consider it as ultimately centering in the honour and service of God! SECT. CLXXIX. Ver.

Well may we be encouraged to hope for that *happiness*, since *Christ* has an universal *power over all flesh*, and over *spirits* superior to those that dwell in flesh; with which he is invested on purpose that he may accomplish the *salvation of those whom the Father has given him*, even of every true believer. We see the certain *way to this life*, even the *knowledge of God in Christ:* let us bless God, that we enjoy so many opportunities of obtaining it; and earnestly pray that *he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness*, would by his Divine rays *shine* forth on our benighted souls; and so animate us in his service, from the noblest principles of gratitude and love, that we may be able to say, even in our dying moments, with somewhat of the same Spirit which *our Lord* expressed, *Father*, we *have glorified thee on earth, and finished the work which thou gavest* us *to do;* and therefore, being *no more in the world*, we *come unto thee.* Then may we hope, in our humble degree, to partake of that *glory* to which he is returned, and to *sit down with him on his* victorious *throne.* 2 3 4 11

In the mean time, may our *faith* see, and our *zeal* confess, *Christ!* May we *acknowledge* his *Divine authority*, as having *come out from the Father!* May we be *united* in love to him, and to each other; and be *kept* by that *Divine word* which is the security of his people, that *none of them* shall be *lost!* Let *the son of perdition*, who perished even from among the *apostles*, teach us an humble jealousy over our own hearts, whatever external privileges we enjoy; and engage us to maintain a continual regard to *him who is able to keep* us *from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy!* (Jude ver. 24.) 7, 8 12

SECT. CLXXX.

Our Lord concludes his prayer, recommending his apostles, and succeeding Christians in every future age, to the favourable regards of his Father, and praying for their union on earth and glory in heaven. John XVII. 13, *to the end.*

JOHN XVII. 13.

AND now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world,

JOHN XVII. 13.

OUR Lord proceeded in that excellent address to God, which he had begun in the former section, in such words as these: *And now*, O my heavenly Father, *I come unto thee* with unutterable SECT. CLXXX. John XVII. 13

SECT. CLXXX.

John XVII. 13

able pleasure; *and these* [*words*] of this prayer *I speak* thus openly in the hearing of my disciples, while I as yet am with them *in the world*, *that they* who now hear me, and those too for whose benefit it may be afterwards recorded, *may have my joy*, even that holy consolation of which I am the author and support, abundantly

14 *fulfilled in them*. And it indeed becomes me to be thus solicitous for their comfort and happiness; for *I have given them thy word*, which they have faithfully received: *and* in consequence of this, though they are indeed the greatest friends and benefactors of mankind, yet *the world has* ungratefully *hated them*, and will be sure to persecute them with the utmost violence, *because they are not of* the same spirit with *the world*, *even as I* myself, in whose cause they are engaged, *am not of the world*, so as to con-

15 form to it in my temper and conduct. Since therefore for my sake they stand thus exposed to hatred, injury, and oppression, I most affectionately bear them on my heart before thee, O my heavenly Father! yet *I do not pray that thou shouldest take them* immediately *out of the world*, bad as it is; since I know the purposes of thy glory, and their own improvement and usefulness, will require their longer continuance in it; *but* I pray *that thou wouldst preserve them from* being either corrupted or overwhelmed by *the evil* which perpetually surrounds them, and that the subtilty and malice of the evil one may never

16 overpower them. For I well know that they will meet with many trials which will bear hard upon them; because (as I have said) *they are not* of a temper suited to the common sentiments and practice *of the world*, *even as I*, their Lord and Master, *am not of the world*.

17 To arm them therefore against so formidable an attack, and to maintain and cultivate this holy temper in them, I would entreat thee to complete the work that is so happily begun, and to *sanctify them* more and more *through thy truth*[a]: and as *thy word* and gospel which they are to preach

world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

[a] *Sanctify them through thy truth.*] I see no reason to conclude, with Mr. Mede, that εν τη αληθεια must be put for εις την αληθειαν, that is, *for the service of the gospel*. That was indeed the remote end which *our Lord* had in view; but the more immediate was that their own souls might be transformed and purified by it.—*To sanctify* signifies in general *to set apart* to any appropriate use; and is used with peculiar propriety with reference to *a sacrifice*: which seems to be the sense in which *our Lord* applies it to himself in ver. 19. Compare Exod. xiii. 2. xxix. 1. and Lev. xxii. 2.

[b] *That*

SECT. CLXXX.

John XVII. 17

preach *is* the great system of sanctifying *truth*, whereby real holiness is to be for ever promoted, may these thy servants feel more and more of its vital energy on their own souls, to qualify them for the office of dispensing it to others. For

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

18 *as thou hast sent me into the world* to be the Messenger of this grace, *I also have sent them into the world* on the same errand, to publish and proclaim what they have learnt of me. *And*

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

19 it is in some measure *for their sakes*, as well as for the salvation of all my people, that *I* now *sanctify myself*, or set myself apart as an offering holy to thee; *that they also*, taught by my example, and animated by my dying love, *may be* truly *sanctified through the truth*, and completely fitted for their important office.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word:

And in presenting these petitions for them, 20 I am not chiefly influenced by the personal attachment of private friendship, but I consider them under their public character; *nor do I pray for these* my apostles *alone*, or offer myself merely for them; *but for them also who shall* hereafter *believe on me through their word*, whether it be preached or written; even for those who are yet unborn, and on whom the ends of the world shall come: *That*, being animated by 21 the same Spirit, and inspired with the same love, *they all may be* truly and intimately *one, as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee; that they also may* in friendship and happiness *be one in us*, united to us and to each other, and deriving from us the richest supplies of Divine consolation; *that* so *the world*, seeing their benevolence, and charity, and holy joy, *may believe that thou hast sent me*, and that a religion productive of such amiable fruits is indeed of Divine original [b]. *And the glory which*, by 22 the covenant of redemption, *thou gavest* unto *me*, *I have*, as authorized by thee, *given* unto *them*, by my faithful and invariable promise, as the great encouragement of their faith and hope [c]; *that they may* all *be one, even as we are one*

21 That they all may be one, as thou Father, *art* in me, and I in thee: that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one:

b *That the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*] This plainly intimates that *dissentions* among *Christians* would not only be uncomfortable to themselves, but would be a means of bringing the truth and excellence of the *Christian religion* into question: and he must be a stranger to what hath passed, and is daily passing, in the world, who does not see what fatal advantage they have given to *infidels* to misrepresent it as a calamity, rather than to regard it as a blessing to mankind. May we be so wise as to take the warning, before we are quite *destroyed one of another!* (Gal. v. 15.)

c *The glory which thou gavest me I have given*

SECT. CLXXX.

John XVII. 23

one, and, in consequence of such a blessed union, may dwell together with us, and with each other, in eternal felicity: Thus therefore may it ever be, *I* dwelling *in them, and thou in me; that they* who now enjoy the first beginnings of this happy state, *may* at length *be made* completely *perfect in one*, and be united in the most cordial love, without any jarring affection, or the least mixture of sorrow and complaint; that so the clearest demonstration may be given of the efficacy of thy grace, *and that the world* by this means *may know that thou hast sent me*, while they perceive them under my forming care to become visibly and justly the favourites of heaven; *and* it may thus be manifest to all that thou *hast loved them, as thou hast loved me*, and hast extended this mercy to them for my sake.

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

24 But no improvements, either in holiness or comfort, in this world, can completely answer the purposes of my love, and the promises of my grace to them; and therefore, O my *Father*, permit me to say, that *I will*, that is, I importunately ask it, and, in consequence of the mutual transactions between us, I am bold to claim it as matter of right, *that they also whom thou hast* graciously *given me*, even all thy chosen and sanctified people, *may* at length *be with me where I am*, in that heavenly world to which I am now removing; *that they may* there *behold* and contemplate, with everlasting delightful admiration, *my glory which thou hast* by thy sure appointment *given me*[d], and art just ready to bestow; *for thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world*, and didst then decree for me that mediatorial kingdom with which thou art now about to invest me.

24 Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

25 And herein thou wilt not only be merciful, but faithful and just too, as it is congruous to those essential perfections of thy nature, *O* most *righteous Father*, thus to distinguish me and my followers with a peculiar glory; for *though the world has not known* or acknowledged *thee*[e], yet *I have*

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me

given them, &c.] As it was plainly in his Father's name, and by the authority of his commission, that Christ had given them this promise, which with a lively faith they had affectionately embraced: so this was one of the strongest arguments that could be urged for the complete accomplishment of it.

d *My glory which thou hast given me.*] This may express the lustre and beauty of Christ's personal appearance, the adoration paid him by the inhabitants of the upper world, and the administration of the affairs of that providential kingdom, which it is his high office to preside over.

e *Though the world has not known thee.*] Thus

I have known thee, and have accordingly directed the whole of my ministrations to thy glory; *and these* my servants to *have known that thou hast sent me*, and will courageously assert it, even at the expence of their very lives. *And I* 26 *have declared thy name to them, and will*, as I have opportunity, farther go on to *declare* [*it*], both by my word, and by my spirit; *that* their graces and services may be more eminent; that even *the love with which thou hast loved me may be* dwelling *in them; and* that *I* also may take up my constant residence *in them* by my spiritual presence, when my bodily presence is removed, as it will quickly be.

John XVII. 25

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

IMPROVEMENT.

WE have indeed perpetual reason of thankfulness that our gra- Ver 13
cious Redeemer *spake these words in the world*, and recalled them thus exactly to the memory of his *beloved disciple* so many years after, that we in the most distant ages of his church might, by reviewing them, *have his joy fulfilled in us*. Let us with pleasure recollect that those *petitions* which *Christ* offered for his *apostles* were expressly declared *not* to be intended *for them alone;* but so far as circumstances should agree, *for all that should believe on* 20
him through their word, and therefore *for us*, if we are real, and not merely nominal *believers*. For us doth he still *pray, not that God would* immediately *take us out of the world*, though for his 15
sake we may be continually *hated* and injured in it; *but that* he 14
would *keep us from the evil* to which we are here exposed. *For our sakes* did he also *sanctify himself* as a propitiation for our sins, 19
that we also might be sanctified through the truth; for he *gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works*. (Tit. ii. 14.)

May these wise and gracious purposes of his love be fulfilled in us! *May* we *be one* with each other, and with him! May that 21
piety and charity appear in the whole series of our temper and behaviour, which may evidently shew the force of our religion, and reflect a conspicuous honour upon the great Founder of it! And may all concur to train us up for that complete felicity above, in which all the purposes of his love centre! It is the declared *will* of *Christ*, and let us never forget it, *that* his people should *be with*

That καὶ here signifies *Though*, the connection plainly demonstrates; and *Elsner* produces many instances of it: (*Observ.* Vol. I. 334.) To which the following instances from the *sacred writers* may be added, among many others, Luke xviii. 7. John xiv. 30. Acts vii. 5. and Heb. iii. 9.

SECT. CLXXX. *with him where he is, that they may behold his glory which the Father has given him.* And there is apparent congruity, as well as
Ver24 mercy in the appointment: that *where he is, there also should his servants* and members *be.* The blessed *angels* do undoubtedly *behold the glory of Christ* with perpetual congratulation and delight; but how much more reason shall *we* have to rejoice and triumph in it when we consider it as *the glory* of one in our own nature, the *glory* of our Redeemer and our Friend, and the pledge and security of our own everlasting happiness! Let us often be lifting up the eyes of our faith towards it, and let us breathe after heaven in this view; in the mean time, with all due zeal, and love, and duty, *acknowledging the Father and the Son,* that the
25 *joys of heaven* may be anticipated in our souls, while *the love of God is shed abroad* there *by his Spirit, which is given unto us;*
26 even something of that *love wherewith he has loved Jesus* our incarnate Head.

SECT. CLXXXI.

Jesus retires from the guest-chamber to the garden of Gethsemane, and in his way thither renews the caution which he had given to Peter and the rest of the apostles. Mat. XXVI. 31—35. Mark XIV. 27.—31. Luke XXII. 39. John XVIII. 1.

JOHN XVIII. 1.

SECT. CLXXXI. *AND when Jesus had spoken these words* that are mentioned above, and had concluded
John XVIII. 1 his discourse with this excellent prayer to his heavenly Father, *he came out* from the guest-chamber, where he had celebrated the passover, *and, according to* his usual *custom* every night, *went forth with his disciples* out of the city; and crossing *over the brook Kedron* which lay on the east side of Jerusalem, he came *to* the foot of *the mount of Olives, where there was a garden* belonging to one of his friends, *into which* he had often been used to retire; and though he knew his enemies would come this very night to seize him there, yet *he entered* into it [a], *and his disciples also followed him.*

JOHN XVIII. 1.

[AND] when Jesus had spoken these words, he [came out, and [went forth [as he was wont,] with his disciples, over the brook Cedron, [to the mount of Olives,] where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples [also followed him.] [LUKE XXII. 39.]

Then,

[a] *A garden, into which he entered.*] Christ probably retired into such a private place, not only for the advantage of secret devotion, which perhaps he might not so well have enjoyed in the city at so public a time, but also that the people might not be alarmed at his being apprehended, nor, in the first sallies of their zeal and rage, attempt to rescue him in a tumultuous manner.—Kedron was, as its name signifies, *a dark shady vale* between Jerusalem and the *mount of Olives,* through which a little *brook* ran which took its name from the place. (Compare 2 Sam. xv. 23.)

MAT. XXVI. 31. Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. [MARK XIV. 27.]

Then, as they were on the way thither, *Jesus says to them*, Notwithstanding all the faith you have professed in me, and all the affection which I know you bear me, yet not only one or an other, but *all of you shall be offended because of me this* very *night*; and the hour is just at hand, when you will be so terrified by the distress befalling me in your presence, that it shall prove the sad occasion of your failing into sin, by your forsaking me, your Master and Friend, and leaving me in the hands of the enemy: *for it is written* (Zech. xiii. 7.) "*I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered:*" I am that Shepherd, and you the timorous sheep, to be dispersed by the assault made on your Keeper. *But*, as it is afterwards added there by way of encouragement, "I will turn my hand upon the little ones," to reduce and recover them from this dissipated state; so likewise I assure you for your comfort, that *after I am risen* from the dead, as I shall soon be, *I will go before you into Galilee*, and there give, not only you, my apostles, but all my disciples, the amplest demonstration both of my resurrection and my love; whereby your hearts shall be established in the firmest adherence to me: and upon this he named the particular place where he would meet them [b].

SECT. CLXXXI.

Mat. XXVI. 31

32 But after [that] I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. [MARK XIV. 28.]

32

33 [But] Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, [yet] will I never be offended. [MARK XIV. 29.]

But Peter was so grieved to hear him say that they should all be offended, and be scattered from him, that, with a confident assurance of his own stedfastness, he *answered and said to him*, My dearest Lord, there is no trial can surmount the love I bear thee! and whatsoever danger or distress may be at hand, I am absolutely resolved and determined upon it, that *though* every one besides, and even *all* the rest of these my brethren, *should be offended because of* the calamities that are coming on *thee*, and upon this account should be induced to forsake thee, *yet will I never be offended*, but will follow thee even to the last.

33

Jesus

b He named the particular place where he would meet them.] An appointment to meet in so large a region as Galilee would without this have been of very little use; and Mat. xxviii. 16. (sect. ccii.) expressly declares such an *appointment*. We do not know the exact place, but we there learn from Matthew it was a certain *mountain*: probably it might be near the *sea of Tiberias*; not only because we find Christ on the borders of *that sea* after his *resurrection* (John xxi. 1. sect. cc.) but also because, as he had resided there longer than any where else, he had, no doubt, the greatest number of his *disciples* thereabouts; and it lay pretty near the centre of his chief circuits, and therefore must be most convenient, especially for those *beyond Jordan*, where *many* had of late *believed in him*. See John x. 40—42, sect. cxxxiv.

c After

SECT. CLXXXI.

Mat. XXVI.

Jesus said to him, Peter, this confidence does not at all become thee, especially after the warning I gave thee at supper[c]; but I repeat it again, and *verily I say unto thee, That to-day*, yea, [*even*] 34 *this* very *night* which is now begun, *before the cock crow twice, thou shalt* repeatedly *deny me* in the most shameful manner; for after thou hast heard it once, thou shalt not be admonished; but before it crow a second time, thou shalt repeat the fault; nay, thou shalt do it *thrice*, and every time with new aggravations.

34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this [day, *even* in this] night, before the cock crow [twice], thou shalt deny me thrice. [MARK XIV. 30.]

35 *But Peter* upon this, instead of being awakened to a humble sense of his own weakness, *spake the more eagerly* [*and*,] with a mixture of grief and indignation at the thought, *said to him*, Lord, no danger whatsoever can induce me to be guilty of such baseness; for such is the sincerity and strength of my affection to thee, that *though I should die with thee* on the place, *yet I will not deny thee in any manner* or degree[d], but would a thousand times rather fall by thy side in a brave and resolute defence, than so much as seem to neglect thee, or in any respect to fail of the strictest and most affectionate fidelity. *Likewise also said all the disciples*, with equal sincerity of present intention, though neither he nor they had courage enough to abide by that resolution. Jesus therefore insisted no farther on the matter, but left them to be taught by the event.

35 [But] Peter [spake the more vehemently, *and*] said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee [in any wise]. Likewise also said all the disciples. [MARK XIV. 31.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Mat. XXVI. 31, 32

So feeble is the heart of man, and yet so ready to trust to its own strength! So gracious is the *Lord Jesus Christ*, that great *Shepherd*

[c] After the warning I gave thee at supper.] See Luke xxii. 34, and John xiii. 38, p. 293, 294. I persuade myself that an attentive comparison of *those texts* with these before us in Matthew and Mark will convince the reader that these admonitions were first given *at the table*, and now repeated as *they went out*: nor can I find any way of forming them all harmoniously into one *compound text*, without such a supposition.

[d] *Spake the more eagerly,—I will not deny thee in any manner* or degree.] Εκ περισσου ελεγε μαλλον,—ου μη σε απαρνησομαι. I think the energy of these *original* expressions cannot be reached in a *version*: I have therefore attempted it in the *paraphrase*; and must observe that, if Mark's *gospel* was reviewed by Peter, as the *ancients* say (and particularly Clemens Alexandrinus, as quoted by *Eusebius Hist. Eccles.* lib. ii. cap. 15, on which see Dr. *Lardner's Credibility*, part ii. Vol. II. chap. 22, § 5), it is peculiarly worth our notice that the aggravations attending *Peter's denial of our Lord* should be more strongly represented by Mark than by any other *evangelist*; which, in that case, probably was done by his own particular direction, and may be regarded as a genuine proof of his deep humiliation and penitence. Compare Mark xiv. 66—72, with Mat. xxvi. 69—75; Luke xxii. 54—62. and John xviii. 25—27, sect. CLXXXIV.

Shepherd and Bishop of souls, who gave himself to be *smitten for his flock* when they had forsaken him; and then returning, sought them out again, and fed them in richer pastures than before! SECT. CLXXXI. Mat. XXVI.

How reasonable is it that our hearts should be fixed in the most inflexible resolution for his service! How fit that we should every one of us say, with the utmost determination of soul, *Lord, though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee!* For how could death wear a more graceful, or a more pleasing form, than when it met us close by *our Saviour's* side, and came as the seal of our fidelity to him? 35

Surely this is the language of many of our hearts before him, especially when warmed and animated by a sense of his dying love to us. Yet *let us not be high-minded;* for *Peter,* after this declaration, *denied his Master;* and *the same night* in which they had protested they would never leave him, *all the disciples forsook him and fled.* (Mat. xxvi. 56.) Nor, on the other hand, let the view of that frailty discourage, though it ought to caution us; for the time came when each of them behaved as they here spoke; and they who in his very presence acted so weak a part, through the influences of his strengthening spirit, *resisted unto blood,* and *loved not their lives unto the death, for the testimony of Jesus.* (Rev. xii. 11.) 34, 35

SECT. CLXXXII.

Jesus enters the garden of Gethsemane, and falls into his agony there; during which his disciples fall asleep, for which he gently reproves them, and warns them of the enemies' approach. Mat. XXVI. 36—46. Mark XIV. 32—42. Luke XXII. 40—46.

MAT. XXVI. 36.
THEN cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane; and [LUKE, when he was at the place, he] saith unto [his] disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. [MARK XIV. 32. LUKE XXII. 40.—]

MAT. XXVI. 36.

THEN, after this discourse with his disciples, *Jesus comes with them to the place* we mentioned above, which was *called Gethsemane,* as being a very pleasant and fertile garden[a]: *and when he was* arrived just *at* the entrance into *the place* whither he was used to retire, *he says to* eight of *his disciples, Sit ye* down *here* a while, and observe what passes abroad, *while I go and pray* in *yonder* retirement. SECT. CLXXXII. Mat. XXVI. 26

And

[a] *Called Gethsemane,* as being a very pleasant and fertile garden.] It is well known that גת שמנים signifies *the valley of Fatness.* The *garden* probably had its name from its soil and situation, and lay in some little *valley* between two of those many hills, the range of which constitutes the *mount of Olives;* and it is with some peculiar reference to this situation that some have rendered it *torcular olei,* or *a fat of oil.*

[b] *He*

SECT. CLXXXII.

Mat. XXVI.

And, as this was a very extraordinary passage of his life, *he took* along *with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, James and John*, who had been witnesses of his transfiguration, and were 37 now chosen by him to be witnesses of his agony. *And* as he went on with them towards a more retired part of the garden, *he began to be in* a very *great* and visible *dejection, amazement, and anguish of mind*[b], on account of some painful and dreadful sensations which were then impressed upon his soul by the immediate hand of God. 38 *Then*, turning to his three disciples, *he says to them*, My friends, you never saw me in so great distress as now; for *my soul is surrounded* on all sides *with* an extremity of anguish and *sorrow*, which tortures me *even* almost *unto death*; and I know that the infirmity of human nature must quickly sink under it, without some extraordinary relief from God; to him therefore I will apply with the greatest earnestness: and do you in the mean time *continue here, and watch with me*[c], considering how liable we are to be surprised; [*and*] let me remind you also to *pray* for yourselves, *that you may not enter into* that dangerous *temptation* of which I have just been giving

37 And he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee [James and John], and began to be sorrowful [sore amazed], and very heavy.—[MARK XIV. 33.]

38 Then saith he to them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me: [LUKE, *and* pray, that ye enter not into temptation.] [MARK XIV. 34. LUKE XXII. 40.]

b *He began to be in great dejection, amazement, and anguish of mind.*] The words which our *translators* use here are very flat, and fall vastly short of the *emphasis* of those terms in which the *evangelists* describe this awful scene: for λυπεισθαι signifies *to be penetrated with* the most lively and piercing *sorrow*; and αδημονειν to be quite *depressed* and almost overwhelmed with the load: Mark expresses it, if possible, in a more forcible and stronger manner; for εκθαμβεισθαι imports the most shocking mixture of *terror* and *amazement*; and περιλυπος, in the *next verse*, intimates that he was *surrounded with sorrow* on every side, so that it broke in upon him with such violence that, humanly speaking, there was no way of escape. I have endeavoured, as well as I could, to express each of these ideas in the *paraphrase*.—Dr. More truly observes, that Christ's continued *resolution*, in the midst of *these agonies* and supernatural *horrors*, was the most heroic that can be imagined; and far superior to valour in single combat, or in battle; where, in one case, the spirit is raised by natural indignation; and in the other, by the pomp of war, the sound of martial music, the example of fellow-soldiers, &c. See *More's Theolog. Works*, p. 38.—Dr. Whitby will not allow that *these agonies* arose from the *immediate hand of God upon him*; which he thinks not to be the case, even of the damned in hell. But it seems impossible to prove that it is not. He rather thinks it might arise from a deep apprehension of the malignity of sin, and the misery brought upon the world by it. But, considering how much the mind of Christ was wounded and broken with what he now endured, so as to give some greater external signs of distress than in any other circumstance of his sufferings, there is reason to conclude there was something *extraordinary* in the degree of the impression: and it surely comes much to the same, whether we say that *God*, by *his own immediate agency*, impressed some uncommon *horrors* on his mind, or that the strength of his spirits, and perhaps the tone of his nerves, were so impaired, that the view he had of these things should affect him to a degree of exquisite and uncommon sensibility.

c *Watch with me.*] Had they done this carefully they would soon have found a rich equivalent for their watchful care, in the eminent improvement of their graces by this wonderful and edifying sight.

d *Take*

giving you notice, or may be kept from falling by it. See Mat. xxvi. 31, sect. clxxxi. SECT. clxxxii.

MARK XIV. 35. And he went forward a little, [LUKE, and was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down,] and fell [on his face] on the ground, and prayed, That if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. [MAT. XXVI. 39.—LUKE XXII. 41.]

36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things *are* possible unto thee; [O my Father, if it be possible,] take away this cup, [*and* let *it* pass] from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt. [MAT. XXVI.—39.]

And going on a little way from thence into a more retired part of the garden, *when he was* now *withdrawn about a stone's throw from* the place where he left *them*, *he* first humbly *knelt down*, *and* then, as the ardour of his devotion increased, he *prostrated himself on his face to the ground, and prayed, That if it were possible, that* dreadful *season* of sorrow, with which he was then almost overwhelmed, *might* be shortened, and *pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father*, I know that *all things* proper to be done *are possible to thee*; and, *O my Father, if it be* so far *possible*, as to consist with what thy wisdom has appointed for the advancement of thy glory, and the salvation of thy people, I earnestly beseech thee, that thou immediately wouldest *take away this cup* of bitterness and terror[d]; [*yea*,] *let* [*it*] now *pass from me*, and let comfort and peace return to my soul: *nevertheless*, if thou seest it necessary to continue it, or to add yet more grievous ingredients to it, I am here ready to receive it in submission to thy will, and resolutely say upon the whole, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt*; for though nature cannot but shrink back from these sufferings, it is the determinate purpose of my soul to bear whatsoever thine infinite wisdom shall see fit to appoint. Mark XIV. 35. 36

37 And he cometh [unto the disciples], and findeth them sleeping; and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?] [What, could ye not watch with me one hour?] MAT. XXVI. 40.]

And upon this, rising up from the ground on which he had lain prostrate, *he comes* again *to the* three *disciples*, *and*, notwithstanding the distress that he was in, and the command that he had given to them to watch, he *finds them* all *asleep: and he* particularly *says to Peter* (who had but lately made such solemn protestations of his peculiar zeal and fidelity), What, *Simon dost thou sleep* at such a time as this? and after thou hadst just declared thy resolution to die with me, *couldst thou* so soon forget thy promise to stand by me, and *not* so much as *watch* or keep awake but 37

d *Take away this cup.*] Nothing is more common than to express *a portion of comfort* or *distress* by *a cup*, alluding to the custom of the father of a family, or master of a feast, to send to his children or guests a *cup* of such liquor as he designed for them. See *note* d, on Mat. xx. 22, p. 134; and with the *texts* which are referred to at the end of that *note* compare Psal. xvi. 5; xxiii. 5; lxxv. 8; Jer. xvi. 7; xlix. 12; Lam. iv. 21; Ezek. xxiii. 32, 33; Hab. ii. 16; and Rev. xiv. 10; xvi. 19. In some of which *texts* there may, perhaps, be a reference to the way of *executing* some criminals by sending them *a cup of poison*; which is well known to have been an *eastern*, though not (so far as I can learn) a *Jewish, custom*.

SECT. CLXXXII.

but for *one hour*, when I was in such an agony? And you that were so ready to join with him in the same profession, could neither of you be

Mark XIV. 37. mindful of me; and in this time of my extreme distress *were ye* all *so unable* to perform your resolution as not *to watch one* single *hour with*

38 *me?* I must again exhort you to *watch and pray* with the greatest earnestness, *that ye may not enter into* and fall by that dangerous *temptation* which is now approaching[e]: *the spirit indeed is forward*, and ready to express the dutiful regard that you have for me, and I know your resolutions of adhering to me are very sincere; *but* yet, as your own present experience may convince you, *the flesh is weak*[f]; and as you have been so far prevailed upon by its infirmities, as to fall asleep at this very unseasonable time, so if you are not more upon your guard, and more importunate in seeking for assistance from above, it will soon gain a much greater victory over you.

38 Watch ye, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation: the spirit truly *is* [willing], but the flesh *is* weak. [MAT. XXVI. 41.]

39 *And* when he had thus gently admonished them, *he went away again the second time*, to a little distance from them, *and prayed* as he had done before, *speaking* much *the same words*, or expressing himself to the like effect, with the same ardour and submission, *saying, O my Father, if* it be necessary, in pursuance of the great end for which I came into the world, that I should endure these grievous sufferings, and *this cup cannot pass from me without my drinking it*, and wringing out, as it were, the very dregs of it, I will still humbly acquiesce, and say, *Thy will be done*, how painful soever it may be to flesh and blood.

39 And again he went away [the second time], and prayed, and spake the same words, [saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.] [MAT. XXVI. 42.]

40 *And returning back* to his three disciples, *he found them asleep again; for* the fatigue and trouble they had lately undergone had exhausted

40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again (for their eyes

e *Watch and pray*, &c.] How poorly is this exhortation answered by those *vigils* and *nocturnal offices* of the *Romish church*, which are said to have had their original from hence! *Rhemish. Testam.* p. 79.—I think it more proper, on a review, to render τίνες ουκ ἰσχύσατε in the preceding *verse*, with Dr. Hammond, *Were ye so unable*, &c. than to retain our version of τίνες, *what*, which seems a less common and less forcible sense.

f *The spirit indeed is forward* and ready, *but the flesh is weak.*] So gentle a rebuke, and so kind an apology (as Archbishop *Tillotson* very justly and beautifully observes), were the more remarkable, as *our Lord's* mind was now discomposed with sorrow, so that he must have the deeper and tenderer sense of the unkindness of his friends. (See *Tillots. Works*, Vol. II. p. 435.)—How apt are we to think *affliction* an excuse for *peevishness!* But how unlike are we to Christ in that thought, and how unkind to ourselves, as well as our friends, to whom, in such circumstances, with our best temper, we must be more troublesome than we could wish!

eyes were heavy); neither wist they what to answer him. [MAT. XXVI. 43.]

ed their spirits, and *their eyes were* quite *weighed down* with weariness and sorrow: *and* he admonished them again as before; and they were so thoroughly confounded, that *they knew not what to answer him*; and yet immediately after they were so weak and senseless as to relapse into the same fault again. SECT. CLXXXII. Mark XIV. 40.

MAT. XXVI. 44. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words;

And, having roused them for the present from their sleep, *he left them; and went away again, and prayed the third time, speaking* much *the same words* as before, or offering petitions to the same effect[g]: *Saying, Father, if thou pleasest to take away this cup from me*, and to excuse me from the continuance of this bitter anguish and distress[h], it is what would greatly rejoice me, and with due submission I would humbly ask it; *nevertheless*, as I said before, *not my will, but thine be done*. *And*, in this last address, his combat was so violent and severe, that he was almost overwhelmed; and therefore, for his assistance against the powers of darkness, which united their force against him in the most terrible manner, *there appeared to him an angel from heaven*, standing near him in a visible form, *strengthening him* by that sensible token of the Father's protection and favour, and suggesting such holy consolations as were most proper to animate his soul in such a struggle[i]. Yet, with all these assurances that he was still the charge of heaven, and quickly should be made victorious Mat. XXVI. 44

LUKE XXII. 42. Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.

43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

44 And, being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat

Luke XXII. 42

43

44

[g] *Speaking* much *the same words.*] It is plain, by comparing ver. 39 and 42, that the *words* were not *entirely the same*; and it is certain that λογος often signifies *matter*; so that no more appears to be intended than that he *prayed to the same purpose* as before.

[h] *If thou pleasest to take away this cup from me.*] The observing reader will easily perceive by the *paraphrase*, that I do not suppose *our Lord* here prayed to be excused *entirely* from sufferings and death. Such a petition appears to me so inconsistent with that steady constancy he always shewed, and with that lively turn (John xii. 27, 28, p. 170) in which he seems to disown such a prayer, that I think even Hooker's solution, though the best I have met with, is not satisfactory. (*Hooker's Eccles. Polity*, lib. v. § 48.) It appears to me much safer to expound it, as Sir *Matthew Hale* does (in his *Contemplations*, Vol. I. p. 59), as relating to the terror and severity of the combat in which he was now actually engaged. (See *Limborch's Theol.* lib. iii. cap. 13, § 17.) This throws great light on Heb. v. 7, *He was heard in that he feared.* —Since the former editions I have had the pleasure to find this interpretation beautifully illustrated and judiciously confirmed by the learned Dr. *Thomas Jackson*, in his *Works*, Vol. II. p. 813, 817, 947.

[i] *An angel from heaven strengthening him.*] Some of the *ancient Christians* thought it so dishonourable to Christ that he should receive such *assistance* from an *angel*, that they omitted *this verse* in their *copies*; as Jerom and Hilary inform us. It is indeed wanting in some *manuscripts*: but far the greatest number of *copies* have it; and could Hilary have proved it a spurious addition, he would, no doubt, have done it, since it so directly contradicts the wild notion he seems to maintain, that Christ was incapable of any painful sensations. (See Dr. *Mill, in loc.*)

SECT. clxxxii.

ous over all, his terror and distress continued; *and, being in an* unspeakable *agony, he prayed* yet *more intensely* than before, insomuch that, though he was now in the open air, *and* in the cool of the night, *his sweat* ran off with uncommon violence; yea, so extraordinary was the commotion of animal nature, that blood was also forced in an amazing manner through the pores together with the sweat; which *was as it were great drops of blood falling down* from his face, and dropping in clots *on the ground,* as he bowed himself to the earth [k].

Luke XXII. 44

sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

45 *And rising up from prayer,* after this dreadful conflict, *he came* back *to his disciples the third time, and,* notwithstanding the repeated admonitions he had given them, he again *found them sleeping; for* their senses were quite stupified,

46 and their spirits exhausted with *sorrow. And he said to them, Why do you* still go on to *sleep* at such a season as this? This drowsy disposition makes it necessary to renew my exhortation, and to call upon you yet once more to *arise and pray that you may not enter into* a circumstance of very dangerous *temptation.* But as all this did not sufficiently rouse them, *and* he knew

Mat. XXVI. 45

those that came to apprehend him were just now entering the garden, *he* altered his voice, and *said to them* in an ironical manner, You may *now sleep on* if you can, *and take your rest* as long as you please. I have been calling you to watch; but *it is* now *enough;* for this season of watching is over, and I have no further need to press you to it: you will now be roused by another kind of alarm than what my words have given; for *behold, the* long expected *hour is* at length *come, and the Son of man is* even now *betrayed into*

45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, [MARK, the third time,] he found them sleeping for sorrow, [MAT. XXVI. 45.—MARK XIV. 41.]

46 And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

MAT. XXVI. 45. And he said unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest; [it is enough;] behold, the hour is [come], and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. [MARK XIV. —41.]

[k] *His sweat was as it were great drops of blood,* &c.] Many *expositors* have thought, as Mr. Le Clerc did, that the expression [ὁ ἱδρὼς αὐτὸ ὡσεὶ θρόμβοι αἱματῶν] only implies that his *drops of sweat were large and clammy like clots of gore:* but Dr. Whitby observes that Aristotle and Diodorus Siculus both mention *bloody sweats* as attending some extraordinary *agony* of mind; and I find *Leti,* in his *Life of Pope Sextus* V. p. 200, and Sir *John Chardin,* in *his History of Persia,* Vol. I. p. 126, mentioning a like phenomenon; to which Dr. *Jackson* (in his *Works,* Vol. II. p. 819) adds another from *Thuanus,* lib. x. p. 221.—Dr. *Scott* and Mr. *Fleming* both imagine that Christ now struggled with the *spirits of darkness:* the former says he was now surrounded with a mighty *host of devils,* who exercised all their force and malice to persecute and distract his innocent soul; and the latter supposes that Satan hoped, by overpowering him here, to have prevented the accomplishment of the prophecies relating to the manner and circumstances of his death. (See *Scott's Christian Life,* Vol. III. p. 149, and *Fleming's Christology,* Vol. II. p. 130.) But however this be, I can hardly think, as Dr. Scott suggests, that there was some supernatural agency of those *evil spirits* in the *drowsiness* of the *disciples,* since the *sacred historian* is silent on this head, and refers it to another cause.

into the hands of the most inhuman *sinners;* SECT. CLXXXII.

46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me. [MARK XIV. 42.]

Arise, therefore, and *let us go* along with them whithersoever they shall lead us; for *behold, he that betrayeth me is just at hand.* Accordingly Judas and his retinue immediately appeared, and seized him in the manner which will be next related. Mat. XXVI. 46

IMPROVEMENT.

ON the most transient survey of this amazing story we cannot but fall into deep admiration. What *a sight* is here! Let our souls *turn aside* to behold it with a becoming temper: and surely we must wonder how the *disciples* could *sleep* in the midst of a scene which might almost have awakened rocks and trees to compassion. Mat. xxvi. 40, 43

Behold *the Prince of life*, God's incarnate and only-begotten Son, *drinking of the brook in the way* (Psal. cx. 7); and not only tasting, but drawing in full draughts of that bitter *cup* which his *heavenly Father* put into his hands on this awful occasion. Let us behold him *kneeling*, and even *prostrate on the ground*, and there pouring out his *strong cries and tears to him that was able to save him from death.* (Heb. v. 7.) Let us view him in this *bloody agony*, and say, *If these things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* (Luke xxiii. 31.) If even Christ himself was so depressed with *sorrow* and *amazement*, and the distress and anguish he endured were such, that in his *agony* the *sweat* ran from him *like great drops of blood*, when *our iniquities were laid upon him*, and *it pleased the Father to bruise him, and to put him to grief* (Isa. liii. 6, 10); how must the sinner then be filled with horror, and with what dreadful *agonies* of anguish and despair will he be overwhelmed, when he shall bear the burden of *his own iniquities*, and God shall *pour out all his wrath* upon him? Behold, how *fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God!* (Heb. x. 31.) Luke xxii. 41, 42 Mark xiv. 35 Luke xxii. 44

Here was no human enemy near our blessed *Redeemer;* yet such invisible *terrors set themselves in array against* him, that his very *soul* was *poured out like water*; nor was there any circumstance of his sufferings in which he discovered a greater commotion of spirit. Nevertheless, his pure and holy soul bare all this without any irregular perturbation. *In all this* he *sinned not* by a murmuring word, or an impatient thought: he shone the brighter for the *furnace of affliction*, and gave us at once the most wonderful and the most amiable pattern of *resignation* to the Divine disposal, when he said, *Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt.*—May this Mat. xxvi. 38 39, 42

SECT. CLXXXII.

this be our language under every trial! *Lord*, we could wish it was; and we would maintain a holy watchfulness over our own souls, that it may be so! But in this respect, as well as in every
41 other, we find that even when *the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak.* How happy is it for us that the blessed *Jesus knows our frame*, and has *learnt*, by what *he himself suffered* in our frail nature, to make the most compassionate allowance for its various infirmities! Let us learn to imitate this his gentle and gracious conduct, even *in an hour* of so much *distress.* Let us bear with and let us pity each other, not aggravating every neglect of our friends into a crime; but rather speaking of their faults in the mildest terms, and making the most candid excuses for what we cannot defend. Let us exercise such a temper, even in the most gloomy and dejected moments of life; which surely may well be expected of us, who ourselves need so much compassion and indulgence almost from every one with whom we converse; and, which is infinitely more, who owe our *all* to the forbearance of that God, *of whose mercy it is that we are not* utterly *consumed.*

SECT. CLXXXIII.

Jesus is betrayed by Judas, and seized by the guard, to whom, after glorious displays of his power, he voluntarily surrenders himself, and is then forsaken by all his disciples. Mat XXVI. 47—56. Mark XIV. 43—52. Luke XXII. 47—53. John XVIII. 2—12.

JOHN XVIII. 2.

SECT. CLXXXIII.

NOW when our Lord was thus retired to the garden, *Judas also that betrayed him knew the place; for Jesus often resorted thither* in com-
John XVIII. 2 pany *with his disciples*[a], and had particularly done it again and again since his coming up to spend this passover at Jerusalem. (Compare
3 Luke xxi. 37. p. 268.) *Judas therefore taking* with him *a band* [*of soldiers*], or a Roman cohort, with their captain (see ver. 12), *and* some Jewish

JOHN XVIII. 2.

AND Judas also which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oft times resorted thither with his disciples.

3 Judas then, having received a band *of men* and officers from the

a *Jesus often resorted thither with his disciples.*] It was probably a *garden* which belonged to one of Christ's friends, and to which he had a liberty of retiring whenever he pleased. And here accordingly he often used to spend some considerable time in prayer and pious converse, in the evenings or nights after his indefatigable labours in the city and temple by day. It is indeed amazing how *flesh and blood* could go through such incessant fatigues; but it is very probable Christ might exert some miraculous power over his own animal nature to strengthen it for such difficult services, and to preserve it in health and vigour; otherwise the copious dews which fall by night in those parts must have been very dangerous (as I have elsewhere hinted, sect. lxxxvi. *note* c), especially when the body was heated by preaching in the day, and often by travelling several miles on foot.

b *Had*

the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.

Jewish *officers*, sent for that purpose *from the chief priests and* other *Pharisees* belonging to the sanhedrim, who were chiefly concerned in this affair, *comes thither with torches and lamps, and* hostile *weapons;* which they brought with them, though it was now full moon, to use their arms, if they should meet with any opposition, or to discover him by their lights, if he should go about to hide himself, as they foolishly imagined he might, among the private walks or other recesses of the garden. SECT. CLXXXIII. John XVIII. 3

MARK XIV. 43. And immediately while he yet spake, [lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came,] and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders [of the people.] [MAT. XXVI. 47. LUKE XXII. 47.--]

And immediately, while he was yet speaking to his disciples, and giving them the alarm mentioned in the close of the last section, *behold*, this very *Judas, one of the twelve* apostles, *came* into the garden, *and with him a great multitude* of persons of very different stations and offices in life, who were sent with authority *from the chief priests, and scribes, and elders of the people;* and, more effectually to execute their orders, they were armed *with swords and staves*, to seize him by violence, if any resistance should be made to the attempt; and there were also with them some persons of superior rank and quality, who, full of impatient and malicious zeal, could not forbear mingling themselves with the dregs of the people upon this infamous occasion. (See Luke xxii. 52, p. 358.) Mark XIV. 43

44 And he that betrayed him [LUKE, went before them, *and*] had given them a token saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, [hold him fast,] and lead *him* away safely. [MAT. XXVI. 48. LUKE XXII.—47.—]

Now he that betrayed him went a little *before* the rest of *them;* [*and*] that they might not be mistaken in the person, *he had given them a signal*, by which they might distinguish Jesus from any others who might chance to be with him[b], *saying, He whom I shall kiss* at my first entering into the garden *is the person* you are commissioned to take[c]; be sure therefore to *lay hold of him* immediately, *and lead him away safely;* for he has sometimes made strange escapes from those that have attempted to take him, and if he get away from you after this signal it will be your fault, and not mine[d]. 44

And

[b] *Had given them a signal.*] As those that came to apprehend him were strangers to Jesus, and it was now night, and there were *twelve* persons together, probably dressed much alike, such a *signal* might be thought more necessary.

[c] *He whom I shall kiss is the person.*] It is indeed probable, as Dr. Guyse and others observe, that *our Lord*, in great condescension, had used (according to the Jewish custom) to permit his disciples thus to *salute him*, when they returned to him after having been any time absent.

[d] *Lead him away safely;* for he has sometimes made strange escapes, &c.] Compare Luke iv. 30; John viii. 59; x. 39.—I am ready to imagine, from this precaution, that Judas might suspect that Christ would on this occasion renew the *miracles* he had formerly wrought for his own deliverance;

SECT. clxxxiii.

Mark XIV. 45

And accordingly, *being come* into the garden, *he drew near to Jesus to kiss him*, as a signal to the company to seize him; [*and*] *going directly to him*, with an air of the greatest respect, as if he had been impatient of his absence during those few hours which had passed since he saw him last, and was quite transported with joy to meet him again, *he said*, with the fairest appearances of duty and friendship, *Hail* to thee, *Rabbi, Rabbi!* May the greatest pleasure and happiness continually attend thee! *And* upon this he *kissed him*. *But Jesus*, well understanding the prefidious purposes concealed under this fond address, answered with great mildness, yet with becoming spirit, and *said to him, Friend, wherefore art thou come?* and whence is all this ceremony and transport? Think of it, *Judas!* Is this the friendship thou hast so often boasted? Alas, *dost thou betray* him whom thou canst not but know to be *the Son of man with* such *a* treacherous *kiss*[e]*?* And dost thou think that he can be imposed upon by this poor artifice? or that God, who has promised him so glorious and triumphant a kingdom, will not punish such baseness and cruelty to him?

Mat. XXVI 50

John XVIII. 4

Then Jesus, though he fully understood what was to follow this perfidious salutation, as *knowing all* the dreadful *things that were coming upon him*[f], yet did not attempt to escape, or to withdraw himself out of the power of his enemies: nevertheless, he determined to shew them that he could easily have done it; and therefore, as they now, upon the signal that was given them

45 And as soon as he was come, he [LUKE, drew near unto Jesus to kiss him; *and*] goeth straightway to him, and saith, [Hail] Master, Master; and kissed him. [MAT. XXVI. 49. LUKE XXII.—47.]

MAT. XXVI. 50.—[But] Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? [Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?] [LUKE XXII. 48.]

JOHN XVIII. 4. Jesus therefore knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth

liverance; though he had so expressly declared the contrary. See Mat. xxvi. 24. sect. clxx. p. 287.

e *Dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?*] There is great reason to believe that *our Lord* uses this phrase of *the Son of man* to Judas on this occasion (as he had done the same evening at supper twice in a breath) in the sense here given (compare *note* i on Mat. xxvi. 24, sect. clxx.) and it adds a spirit to these words that has not often been observed, which the attentive reader will discern to be attended with much greater strength and beauty than if *our Lord* had only said, *Dost thou betray* me *with a kiss?*

f *Knowing all things that were coming upon him.*] *Our Lord* not only knew in general that he should suffer some great evil, and even *death* itself, but was acquainted also with all the particular *circumstances* of ignominy and horror that should attend his *sufferings*: which accordingly he largely foretold (see Mat. xx. 18, 19, and the *parallel* places, p. 132), though many of these circumstances were as *contingent* as can well be imagined.—It is impossible to enter aright into the heroic behaviour of *our Lord Jesus Christ*, without carrying this circumstance along with us. The *critics* are in raptures at the gallantry of Achilles in going to the *Trojan war*, when he knew (according to Homer) that he should fall there: but he must have a very low way of thinking who does not see infinitely more fortitude in *our Lord's* conduct on this great occasion, when this circumstance, so judiciously though so modestly suggested by St. John, is duly attended to.

g *They*

forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also which betrayed him, stood with them.

6 As soon then as he had said unto them I am *he*, they went backward and fell to the ground.

7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

them, were drawing near to seize him, he *went forth* towards his enemies, *and said to them*, with the greatest composure of mind, *Whom do you come to seek* here? And *they* were so confounded at the air of majesty and intrepidity with which he appeared, that without saying they were come for him, they only *answered him*, We are come to seek *Jesus the Nazarene*. *Jesus says to them*, You have the person then before you; *I am* [*he*.] *And Judas also who betrayed him*, then *stood with them*; and he who formerly had followed Christ as one of his disciples, now sorted with his open and avowed enemies: *Then as soon as he said to them*, *I am* [*he*,] there went forth such a secret energy of Divine power with those words, that all their united force was utterly unable to resist it; so that *they* presently *drew back*, as afraid to approach him, though unarmed and unguarded; *and fell* at once *to the ground* [g], as if they had been struck with lightning. Yet a few moments after, recovering from this consternation, they arose and rallied again; and *then* as they came up the second time, *he asked them again*, *Whom do you seek? And they said* to him as before, *Jesus the Nazarene*. *Jesus answered* them, *I have* already *told you that I am* [*he*:] *If therefore you seek me* alone, you may *let these* my companions and friends *go their way* in safety [h]; and indeed I shall insist upon that as a condition of surrendering myself to you, which you may easily perceive I could refuse, if I thought fit.

SECT. clxxxiii.

John XVIII. 5 6 7 8

[g] *They drew back, and fell to the ground.*] As there were *scribes* and *priests* among them, they must have read of the *destruction* of those *companies* which came to seize the prophet Elijah, (2 Kings i. 10, 12.) a fact which bore so great a resemblance to *this*, that it is an amazing instance of the most obdurate wickedness, that they should venture to renew the assault on Christ, after so sensible an experience both of his power and mercy. Nothing seems more probable, than that these wretches might endeavour to persuade themselves, and their attendants, that this strange repulse was effected by some *demon* in confederacy with Jesus, who opposed the execution of justice upon him; and they might, perhaps, ascribe it to the special providence of God, rather than to the indulgence of Jesus, that they had received no farther damage. The most corrupt heart has its reasonings to support it, in its absurdest notions and most criminal actions.

[h] *Let these go their way*] What *tenderness* was here towards those who had so lately neglected him (*sleeping* while he was in such an extreme *agony*,) that yet he would not suffer them to be terrified by so much as a short imprisonment! and the words also intimate that he intended presently to *dismiss them*, as probably not thinking it convenient to appear before his judges with such an attendance. His *disciples*, perhaps might consider this speech as an excuse for their *forsaking him*; but had they viewed it in a just light, it would rather have appeared a strong engagement upon them to have waited for that fair *dismission* which *our Lord* seemed about to give them.

[i] *I have*

SECT. CLXXXIII.

fit. And this he said, *that the saying he uttered* before *might* farther *be* illustrated and *accomplished*, "*Of those whom thou*, my heavenly
John XVIII. 9 Father, *hast given me*, *I have lost*, and will lose, *none*!" (See John xvii. 12. p. 335.)

Mat. XXVI. 50 And *then*, as he was speaking this, *they* that were sent to apprehend him *came*, *and laid their hands upon Jesus*, *and took him* prisoner without his making any manner of resistance. *Now*
Luke XXII. 49 upon this, *when his disciples saw* that they had seized him, and began to apprehend *what would be the consequence* of these things, *they said to him*, *Lord*, *shall we smite* these impious wretches *with the sword?* for we doubt not, but as few as we are, thou canst render us

Mat. XXVI. 51 victorious over this armed multitude. *And*, without staying for his answer, *behold*, *one of them that were with Jesus*, [*even*] *Simon Peter*[k], *having a sword*, *stretched out his hand*, *and drew it* with a rash inconsiderate zeal, *and smote a servant of the high-priest*, *whose name was Malchus*, who was one of the forwardest, and seemed peculiarly officious in seizing Christ[l]: *and* he struck full at his head, intending to cleave him down, but the stroke glanced a little on one side, so that he only *cut off his right ear*.

52 *Then Jesus*, being determined to surrender himself into the hands of his enemies, and still to shew that such a surrender was the effect, not of compulsion, but of choice, *said unto Peter*, *Return thy sword into the sheath again: for* I will not have recourse to this, or any other method of defence: and indeed, *all that take the sword shall perish by the sword*, and they that are most ready to take up arms are commonly the

9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me, have I lost none.

MAT. XXVI. 50. Then came they, and laid [their] hands on Jesus, and took him. [MARK XIV. 46.]

LUKE XXII. 49. When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

MAT. XXVI. 51. And behold one of them which were with Jesus, [JOHN, *even* Simon Peter, having a sword,] stretched out his hand, and [JOHN, drew it, and] struck a servant of the high-priest's, [JOHN, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.] [MARK XIV. 47. LUKE XXII. 50. JOHN XVIII. 10.]

52 Then said Jesus unto [Peter,] Put up again thy sword into [the sheath]; for all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword. [JOHN XVIII. 11.—]

i. *I have lost none.*] Jansenius justly observes, that it was a remarkable instance of the power of Christ over the spirits of men, that they so far obeyed his word as not to seize Peter when he had cut off the ear of Malchus; or John, while he stood by the cross, though they must know them to have been of the number of his most intimate associates.

k *Even Simon Peter.*] None of the *evangelists* but John mentions the *name* of Peter on this occasion; which, perhaps, the others omitted, lest it should expose him to any prosecution; but John, writing long after his death, needed no such precaution.

l *Smote a servant of the high-priest*, &c.] One would have thought, as Bishop Hall observes, he should rather have *struck Judas*; but the *traitor*, perhaps, on giving the signal had mingled himself with the crowd; or Peter might not understand the treacherous design of his *kiss*; or seeing Malchus more eager than the rest in his attack on Christ, he might postpone all other resentments to indulge the present sally of his indignation.—Though this might seem a courageous action, it was really very *imprudent*; and had not Christ by some secret influence overawed their spirits, it is very probable (as the pious Sir *Matthew Hale* observes) that not only Peter, but the rest of the *apostles*, would have been cut to pieces. (*Hale's Contemplations*, p. 254.

the first that will fall by them; which might be intended as an intimation that the Jews, who were now drawing the sword against him, should ere long perish by it in a very miserable manner, as they quickly after did in the Roman war; and that the sword of Divine vengeance, in one form or another, would quickly find out all his implacable enemies. And besides, Peter, *dost thou think* that I want the aid of thy feeble arm, and *that I cannot now entreat my Father*, *and* have such interest with him, that *he would presently furnish me with* a celestial army for my guard, marshalled in dreadful array, and consisting of *more than twelve legions of angels*[m]? *But how then*, if I should thus stand on my defence, *shall the scriptures be fulfilled*, even the very prophecies which I came to accomplish, which have so expressly foretold, *that thus it must be?* Or how should I approve my submission to him that sent me? You only look at second causes, and have but an imperfect view of things; but I consider all the sufferings I am now to meet as under a Divine direction and appointment, and regard them as *the cup which my Father has given me;* and, when considered in that view, *shall I not* willingly submit to *drink it?* Shall I not acquiesce in what I know to be his will? or would it be the part of a dutiful and affectionate Son to dispute the determinations of his paternal wisdom and love?

SECT. CLXXXIII.

Mat. XXVI. 52 53 54

John XVIII. 11

53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

JOHN XVIII.—11. The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

Then without any opposition he surrendered himself into the hands of those that came to apprehend him: and all uniting in their enmity against him, *the band* of Roman soldiers, *with the captain* at their head, *and the Jewish officers* that came with them, *seized Jesus* as a malefactor, *and* presently *bound him* to prevent his escape. *But* as they were binding him, *Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye* at least that I may have my hands at liberty *thus far*, and stay but for a moment, while I add one act of power and compassion to those I have already done: *and* calling

12

Luke XXII. 51

12 Then the band, and the captain, and officers of the Jews, took Jesus, and bound him.

LUKE XXII. 51. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched

m *More than twelve legions of angels.*] The *Roman armies* were composed of *legions*, which did not always consist of the same number of men, but are computed at this time to have contained above *six thousand*; and *twelve legions* were more than were commonly intrusted with their greatest generals. (See *note* e on Luke viii. 30. Vol. VI. p. 366.) How dreadfully irresistible would such an *army* of *angels* have been, when *one* of these celestial spirits was able to destroy 185,000 Assyrians at one stroke; 2 Kings xix. 35.

n *He*

SECT. CLXXXIII. calling Malchus to him, *he touched his ear, and* immediately *healed him*[n].

touched his ear, and healed him.

Luke XXII. 52 *Then Jesus said in that same hour to the chief priests, and to the captains of the temple*-guard[o], *and to the elders* of the people, or to those members of the sanhedrim *who* (as was said before, p. 353.) *were* so forgetful of the dignity of their characters as to *come to him* themselves with the dregs of the populace, at this unseasonable time, and on this infamous occasion: to these he said, *[and] to the multitude* that now surrounded him, For what imaginable reason *are you come out* against me, *as against a robber* that would make a desperate resistance, armed in this way *with swords and staves*, as if you came *to seize me* at

52 Then Jesus said [in that same hour] unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders which were come to him [*and* to the multitudes,] Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves [for to take me?] [MAT. XXVI. 55.—MARK XIV. 48.]

53 the hazard of your lives? *When I was with you every day*, as I have been for some time past, *[and]* publicly *sate teaching in the temple*, you had opportunities enough to have secured me, if there was any crime with which you could have charged me; yet then *you did not apprehend me*, *[or]* offer to *stretch out [your] hands against me*. *But* I know the reason better than you yourselves do: you have hitherto been kept under a secret restraint, which is now removed; and *this is your hour*, in which God has let you loose against me, *and the power of darkness* is now permitted to rage with peculiar violence; for it is under the instigation of Satan and his infernal powers that you now act, with whatever pious names you may affect to consecrate the deed. *And* in *all this* I know, that both you and they are secretly over-

53 When I was daily with you, [*and* sat teaching] in the temple, ye [MARK, took me not, *and* stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness. [MAT. XXVI. 55.—MARK XIV. 49.—]

Mat. XXVI. 56

MAT. XXVI. 56. —But

n *He touched his ear, and healed him.*] As this was an act of great compassion, so likewise it was an instance of singular wisdom; for it would effectually prevent those reflections and censures on Jesus which the rashness of Peter's attack might otherwise have occassioned.

o *The captains of the temple.*] There was indeed a Roman guard and commanding *officer* which attended near the *temple* during the time of the great feasts, in order to prevent any sedition of the Jews: (see *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. xviii. cap. 4. [al 6.] § 3. and *Bell. Jud.* lib. v. cap. 5. [al. vi 6.] § 8.) And this appears to be *the band and captain* mentioned here by John ver. 12. where the word in the *original* is χιλιαρχος which plainly shews it was *a Roman officer*, and is the title given to Lysias, (Acts xxi. 31. *& seq.*) who was commander of the garrison kept by the Romans in the castle of Antonia; from whence there were detachments sent at the time of the feasts, and posted in the porticoes of the temple, to suppress any tumults among the people, when such great numbers flocked together.—But for these *captains of the temple* spoken of by Luke, there is no doubt but they were *Jewish officers*, who are said by John to have attended with the former; of whom it is to be observed, that as the *priests* kept watch in three places of the *temple*, and the Levites in twenty-one, so their leaders were called στρατηγοι του ιερου, or *captains of the temple*; and Josephus more than once speaks of one of the *Jewish priests* by this title, (*Antiq.* lib. xx. cap. 6. [al. 5.] § 2. cap. 9. [al. 8.] § 3. and *Bell. Jud.* lib. ii. cap. 17. § 2.) (See Dr. *Whithy in loc.* and Dr. *Lardner's Credib.* part i. Vol. 1. book 1. ch. ii. § 15.

p *That*

—But all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. [MARK XIV.—49.]

over-ruled by Divine Providence, to accomplish events most contrary to your own schemes; and it *is done, that* what is written concerning me in *the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled* [p]. I therefore resign myself into your hands, though I have given you abundant evidence that I am not destitute of the means of deliverance, if I was inclined to use them.

SECT. CLXXXIII.

Mat. XXVI. 56

—56 Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. [MARK XIV. 50.]

Then all the disciples, who but a little while before had solemnly protested that they would never leave him, when they now saw him bound in the hands of his enemies, according to his repeated predictions, *forsook him and fled* [q]; each of them shifting for his own safety as well as he could, and seeking to shelter himself either among friends or strangers.

MARK XIV. 51. And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him.

And a certain youth, who lodged in a house near the garden, and was waked by the noise of this tumult, *having* an affection for Jesus, and apprehending him in danger, arose out of bed with nothing but *a linen cloth* in which he lay, *thrown about his naked body;* and he *followed him* a little way after the rest of his disciples were gone, transported into a forgetfulness of his own dress, by his concern for Jesus: *and the young men* that made a part of the guard, suspecting he was one that belonged to Jesus, *laid hold on him.*

Mark XIV. 51

52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

But he, leaving the sheet which was wrapped about him in their hands, *fled away from them naked,* in the utmost consternation. After which Jesus was led to the palace of the high-priest, and condemned there, in the manner which will presently be related.

52

IMPROVE-

p *That the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.*] This was a consideration, which, if duly applied, might have prevented his *disciples* from being *offended* at his *sufferings:* and it strongly intimates that he still kept up the claim which he had formerly made of being the Messiah; and that what he was now to go through, was so far from being at all inconsistent with that claim, that, on the whole, it was absolutely *necessary,* in order to make it out to full satisfaction.

q *All the disciples forsook him and fled.*] Perhaps they were afraid that the action of Peter should be imputed to them all, and might bring their lives into danger. But, whatever they apprehended, their precipitate *flight* in these circumstances was the basest cowardice and ingratitude; considering, not only how lately they had been warned of their danger, and what solemn promises they had made of a courageous adherence to Christ; but also what an *agony* they had just seen him in, what zeal, he had a few moments before shewed in their defence, and what amazing power he had exerted to terrify his enemies into a compliance with that part of his demand which related to the safety of his friends. He had also at the same time intimated his purpose of giving them a speedy and kind *dismission;* so that it was very indecent thus to *run away* without it, especially as Christ's prophecy of their continued usefulness in his church was equivalent to a promise of their preservation, whatever danger they might now meet with. But *our Lord* probably permitted it, that we might learn not to depend too confidently even on the friendship of the very best of men.

IMPROVEMENT.

SECT. CLXXXIII. THE heroic behaviour of the blessed *Jesus*, in the whole period of his *sufferings*, will easily make itself observed by every attentive eye, though the *sacred historians*, according to their usual but wonderful simplicity, make no encomiums upon it. With what composure does he go forth to meet the traitor! with what calmness does he receive that malignant *kiss!* With what dignity does he deliver himself into the hands of his *enemies*, yet plainly shewing his superiority over them, and *leading* as it were even then *captivity captive!*

John xviii. 4. Mat. xxvi. 50. 52, 53

We see him generously capitulating for the *safety* of *his friends*, while he neglected *his own;* and afterwards, not only *forbidding* all the *defence* they attempted to make, but *curing* that *wound* which one of his enemies had received in this assault on him. With what meek majesty did he say, *Suffer ye* at least *thus far! And he touched his ear, and healed him.* We hear his words, we behold his actions with astonishment: but surely our indignation must rise within us when we see so amiable and excellent a Person thus injured and abused; when we see *the Son of man betrayed with a kiss: betrayed* by his intimate friend, who had *eaten of his bread*, and yet *lifted up his heel against him*, (John xiii. 18.) and at the same time *forsaken by all his disciples*, even by him whom he most tenderly *loved*, and who had so often *leant on his bosom.* Let us not wonder if some of our *friends* prove false; and others seem to forget us when we have the greatest need of their assistance. When we deserve so much less *friendship* than *Christ* did, let us not think it strange if we find but little more. Nor can we reasonably be so much amazed, as we might otherwise have been, to see sinners going on under the most awful *rebukes* of providence; when we consider that these wretches, who had been *struck down to the ground* by one *word* of *Christ's* mouth, should immediately *rise up* and stretch forth their impious hands against him, to *seize and bind him;* though they might well have known that they lived only by his indulgence and forbearance, and that the same *word* that *struck them down to the ground* could have laid them *dead* there. *Touch our hearts, O Lord*, by thy *grace;* or it will be in vain that we are *smitten* with thy *rod!*

John xviii. 8, 9, 11 Luke xxii. 51 47, 48 Mat. xxvi. 56 John xviii. 6, 12

In all the remainder of this story let us remember that *Jesus* voluntarily *gave himself up* to *sufferings* which he circumstantially foreknew; even though he could have commanded to his assistance whole *legions of angels. His Father's will* was an answer to all that nature could plead in its own cause; and the good hand from which *this cup* of his severest sufferings came, reconciled him to all the bitterest ingredients it contained. How reasonable then

Mat. xxvi. 53 John xviii. 11

then is it that we who, having *had fathers of our flesh that corrected us*, submitted to the rod, and *gave them reverence*, should *much rather*, after the example of our innocent and holy Redeemer, *be in subjection to the Father of* our *spirits, and live!* (Heb. xii. 9.) SECT. CLXXXIII.

SECT. CLXXXIV.

Jesus is conducted to the palace of Caiaphas: Peter follows him thither, and denies him thrice, Mat. XXVI. 57, 58, 69, *to the end.* Mark XIV. 53, 54, 66, *to the end.* Luke XXII. 54—62. John XVIII. 13—18, 24—27.

JOHN XVIII. 13.

JOHN XVIII. 13.

AND *they* led him away to Annas first, (for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high-priest that same year.)

THE officers *and* people having thus apprehended Jesus, in the manner described above, *they led him away* from the garden of Gethsemane to those who had employed them, and brought him *first to* the house of *Annas; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was high-priest that year*[a], or bore the office at that time: SECT. CLXXXIV. John XVIII. 13

24 (Now Annas—sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high-priest.)

And Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high-priest, as judging it most proper that the rest of the council should upon this occasion be convened at his palace. 24

14 Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

Now this *Caiaphas was he* whom we mentioned above (John xi. 49—51, sect. cxli.) *who gave* it as his *advice to the Jews, that it was fit that one man,* though innocent, *should die for* the preservation of *the people:* in which words he uttered a kind of oracle, which (as we there observed) contained a far nobler and sublimer sense than he himself intended or understood. 14

And

a *Led him away first to Annas,* &c.] It appears from *Josephus* (*Antiq.* lib. xviii. cap. 2 [al. 3], § 2, p. 873, *Havercamp.*) that Annas, whom he calls *Ananus*, had been *high-priest* before his son-in-law Caiaphas; and it seems to have been by his interest, that first Eleazer his own son, and then Caiaphas, who married his daughter, and probably had been his *deputy*, obtained that dignity: so that though he had resigned that office himself, yet the people paid so much regard to his experience, that they *brought Jesus first* to him; who, no doubt, took all necessary care to prepare Caiaphas for receiving him, as he could not but know that this was a most critical juncture. We do not read of any thing remarkable which passed at the house of Annas; for which reason his being carried thither is omited by the other *evangelists.* Cyril adds, και απεστειλαν αυτον δεδεμενον προς Καιαφαν τον Αρχιερεα, *and they sent him bound to Caiaphas the high-priest;* which addition Erasmus, Beza, and many others have thought it necessary to admit, both to account for the *word* πρωτον, *first*, in the preceding clause, and to reconcile John with the other *evangelists*, who all agree that the scene of *Peter's fall* was the *palace* of Caiaphas, not of Annas. Yet, as almost the same words occur in ver. 24, it is sufficient to *transpose that verse*, and introduce it here; which is intimated in the *margin* of some of our Bibles.—For the phrase of being *high-priest that year*, see *note* on John xi. 49. p. 127.

Followed

SECT. clxxxiv.

Mat. XXVI. 57

And they who had apprehended Jesus took and led him away from Annas like a criminal in bonds, *and*, according to the directions which Annas had given them, *brought him to the palace of Caiaphas the high-priest; where*, though it was now the dead time of the night, *all the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders*, or the chief persons of the sanhedrim, with their proper officers, met together on a summons from Caiaphas, and *were assembled with him*, waiting for Jesus to be brought before them.

MAT. XXVI. 57. And they that had laid hold on Jesus [LUKE, took him, and] led *him* away, [LUKE, and brought him into the house of] Caiaphas the high-priest; where [all the chief priests, and] the scribes, and the elders were assembled [with him].—[MARK XIV. 53.—LUKE XXII. 54.—]

John XVIII. 15

And though *Simon Peter* had at first forsaken Christ, and shifted for himself, as the rest of his companions did, yet afterwards he *and another disciple*, even the evangelist John, bethought themselves, and determined to return; and accordingly they *followed Jesus afar off*[b], desiring to see what would become of him: *and* as *that* other *disciple was known to the high-priest*[c], he was admitted without any objection or impediment, *and went into the palace of the high-priest with Jesus* and the guard that attended him.

JOHN XVIII. 15. And Simon Peter followed Jesus [afar off], and *so did* another disciple. That disciple was known unto the high-priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high-priest. (MAT. XXVI. 58.—MARK XIV. 54.—LUKE XXII.—54.)

16

But Peter, who had no interest or acquaintance there, *stood* waiting *without at the door: that other disciple therefore, who was known to the high-priest, went out* of the inner-room, into which Jesus was then carried in order to his examination, *and spake to her that kept the door* to open it; *and* so by her consent *brought in Peter.*

16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple which was known unto the high-priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

Luke XXII. 55

And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the large *hall, and were set down together, Peter*, hoping to pass undiscovered by mingling with the rest of the company, *sate down among them with the servants*, that he might be at hand *to see the end* of this affair, *and warmed himself at the fire*, while they were examining Jesus with circumstances which we shall afterwards mention[d].

LUKE XXII. 55. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them [with the servants to see the end,] [MARK, and warmed himself at the fire]. [MAT. XXVI.—58. MARK XIV.—54.]

And,

b *Followed Jesus afar off.*] It appears from hence that Peter and John recovered themselves quickly after their flight, or else they could not have *followed him at some distance*, and yet be so near as to be ready to go into Caiaphas's house *with him.*

c *That disciple was known to the high-priest.*] We cannot imagine the acquaintance was very intimate, considering the great diversity of their rank and station in life; but a thousand occurrences occasion some *knowledge* of each other, between persons whose conditions are as unequal

d *And warmed himself at the fire*, while they were examining Jesus, &c.] It is remarkable that all the *evangelists* record the *fall of Peter*, and none with circumstances of greater aggravation than Mark, whose *gospel* is said to have been reviewed by Peter himself, and indeed written from his preaching. (See *note* d on Mark xiv. 31, p. 544.)—Though *Christ's examination* happened during this interval (which occasions Matthew, Mark, and John, to interrupt *this story* to recount *that*), I rather chose, as Luke has done, to take the whole of it together, as best suiting the design of this work.

e *This*

MARK XIV. 66. And as Peter [sat without] beneath in the palace, there cometh [unto him] one of the maids of the high-priest, [JOHN, the damsel that kept the door.] [MAT. XXVI. 69.—JOHN XVIII.—17.]

67 And when she saw Peter [LUKE, as he sat by the fire] warming himself, she looked, [LUKE, earnestly] upon him, and said, [LUKE, This man was also with him:] [JOHN, Art not thou also *one* of this man's disciples?] And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth [of Galilee.] [MAT. XXVI. —69. LUKE XXII. 56. JOHN XVIII.—17.—]

LUKE XXII. 57. And he denied him [before them all], saying, Woman, [JOHN, I am not;] I know him not, [MARK, neither understand I what thou sayest.] [MAT. XXVI. 70. MARK XIV. 68.—JOHN XVIII.—17.]

And, during the time that this important event was depending, *as Peter was sitting* among the servants *without* the room where Jesus was examined, and thought to have continued unsuspected *in the hall below, there came to him one of the maid-servants* belonging to the family *of the high-priest*, who was indeed *the* same *damsel that* (as we just now said) had *kept the door: And seeing Peter as he sat warming himself by the fire she fixed her eyes earnestly upon him, and*, observing in his countenance the appearance of great concern, she *said* to some that stood near her, I cannot but think that *this man* is a follower of Jesus, and *was also* one that used to be *with him*[e]: and upon this presumption she charged him directly with it, and said, Tell us truly, *Art not thou* thyself *also* [*one*] *of this man's disciples*[f]? There is a great deal of room to think it; *yea*, I am fully satisfied that *thou wast also with* him, even with this *Jesus the Nazarene of Galilee*, who is now on his trial. *And* Peter was so surprised at this unexpected discovery, that *he* roundly and confidently *denied him before them all*[g], *and said, Woman*, I profess that *I am not* his disciple; nay, that *I do not* so much as *know him*[h]; *nor do I understand what thou meanest* in charging me with being one of his associates; for I am sure thou mightest as well have fixed on any other person in the

SECT. CLXXXIV.

Mark XIV. 66.

67

Luke XXII. 57

e *Thus man was also with him.*] Her *sex*, and perhaps we may add, her *office*, will not permit us to suppose that she had been in the *garden* with the multitude that apprehended Jesus: she therefore must guess by *Peter's countenance*, that he was *one of his friends*; unless possibly she had seen them together in the temple or elsewhere.

f *Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?*] One would imagine from the word [*also*], when it is read in the connection John has placed it in, that in this question she referred to John; as if she had said, Art not thou one, as well as thy companion? And, if this were admitted, it would be a plain intimation that John acknowledged himself a *disciple of Christ*. But it must be owned that the other *evangelists* used the same word [*also*], though they say nothing of John's being with Peter.

g *He denied him before them all.*] How must these people be surprized when they saw (as, no doubt, some of them did) this *timorous disciple* within the compass of a few weeks, when he was brought with John before the council, not only maintaining the cause and honour of Jesus, but boldly charging the murder of this *Prince of life* on the chief men of the nation, and solemnly warning them of their guilt and danger in consequence of it, Acts iv. 5—12. Perhaps, when it is said there (ver. 13) that *they took knowledge of Peter and John that they had been with Jesus*, the meaning may be, that some of them, or their attendants, remembered Peter and John as the *two* persons who had followed Jesus thus far, when the rest had forsaken him. Compare John xviii. 15, 16.

h *I do not know him.*] Jesus was so public a person, and so well *known to thousands*, not at all in his interest, that this additional *falsehood* was most unnecessary; and, as it frequently happens, when people allow themselves to transgress the bounds of truth, it was more like to entangle and discover him than to clear him.

SECT. CLXXXIV.

the company. *And* upon this, turning away as one who was affronted at the charge, *he went out into the portico*[i]; *and* while he was there *the cock crew*[k].

Mark XIV.68.

John XVIII. 18

And the servants and officers who had brought Jesus thither, and were now waiting for the issue of his trial, still *stood there* in the hall, *having* (as was before observed) *made a* large *fire of coals; for* they had been abroad in the night, and *it was cold*[l], *and they were warming themselves* at the fire. *And Simon Peter*, having staid a while in the portico, where he not only must have been incommoded by the sharpness of the air, but was, no doubt, in a restless commotion of mind on account of what had passed, came in again, and, having mingled with the servants, *stood* at the fire-side *to warm himself amongst them.*

Mat. XXVI. 71

And when he had thus *been gone out into the portico*, and was returned into the hall, *after a little while another maid saw him again, and said to them that were there* (as her fellow-servant had done just before), Whatever he pretends, I verily believe *this man was also with Jesus of Nazareth: and* presently *she began to say* openly *to them that stood by, Surely this is* [*one*] *of them* that have endeavoured to bring all the nation into confusion, and while he would pass for a friend is crept in hither as a spy. *They therefore*, taking notice of what both these women had spoken, began to tax him with it, and *said to him*, What, have we a rebel so near us? Let us know plainly who thou art: *art not thou also*, who pretendest to enter these doors as a friend, [*one*] *of his disciples* who has been doing so much mischief? *And*, as he seemed in great confusion, *another man* that stood by *saw him* perplexed, and therefore charged it home upon him, *and said*, It is certainly so; *thou art also* [*one*] *of them*, and deservest to suffer

John XVIII. 25

Luke XXII.58

MARK XIV.—68. And he went out into the porch, and the cock crew.

JOHN XVIII. 18. And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals (for it was cold), and they warmed themselves: and [Simon] Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. [JOHN XVIII. 25.—]

MAT. XXVI. 71. And when he was gone out into the porch [LUKE, after a little while] another [maid] saw him [again], and said unto them that were there, This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth: [and *she* began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them.] [MARK XIV. 69. LUKE XXII. 58.—]

JOHN XVIII.—25. —They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also *one* of his disciples?

LUKE XXII.—58. —And another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them.

[i] *He went out into the portico.*] I apprehend that the word πρόαυλιον most exactly answers to the Latin word *vestibulum*, by which many good *interpreters* render it. And, considering the magnificence of the *Jewish buildings* at this time, it is reasonable to conclude, that *this*, which belonged to the *high-priests palace*, was some stately *piazza* or *colonnade*; and therefore I chose rather to render it *portico*, than *porch*, a word equally applicable to the meanest buildings of that kind.

[k] *The cock crew.*] It is strange this circumstance did not remind him of *our Lord's* prediction, and bring him to some sense of his sin: perhaps it did; and he might return persuaded that he should be more courageous if he met with a second attack.

[l] *For it was cold.*] It is well known that the *coldness of the nights* is generally more sensible in those hotter countries than among us.

SECT. CLXXXIV.

MAT. XXVI. 72. And [LUKE, Peter] again denied [it] with an oath, [JOHN, and said,] [LUKE, Man, I am not;] I do not know the man. [MARK XIV. 70.—LUKE XXII.—58. JOHN XVIII.—25.]

fer with thy Master. *And Peter*, as he could not bear his being taxed so closely with it, that he might take off all suspicion of his belonging unto Jesus, *again denied* [*him*] in the strongest manner, even *with an oath* [m], *and said*, *Man*, why dost thou talk thus? I solemnly assure thee, and call God to witness to it, that *I am not* one of them; and that indeed *I do not* so much as *know the man*, but came in hither out of mere curiosity, to learn the occasion of this public alarm, without the least interest in him, or any concern at all on his account, whatever may become of him.

Mat. XXVI. 72

LUKE XXII. 59. And [after a while] about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this *fellow* also was with him; for he is a Galilean. [MAT. XXVI. 73.—MARK XIV.—70.—]

And as he still continued there, imagining that he should now be safe from any further challenge, *after a while*, *about the space of one hour after* he had thus denied him, *another man* in the company *confidently affirmed* that the former charge was just, *saying*, *Of a truth this man was also with him*, and is a follower of this Jesus; *for* it is plain *he also is a Galilean*, and every one knows that most of his disciples are of that country. *And*, upon this *they that stood by came to him*, *and said to Peter again*, *Surely* it is as this man asserts; and, notwithstanding thy denying it, there is no room to doubt but *thou art also* [*one*] *of them*, *for thou art* certainly *a Galilean: and* I know it, said one that was there, by *thy speech*; for such I have observed to be thy dialect and accent, as *agrees* [*to that*] country, [*and*] plainly *discovers thee* to be of Galilee, as most of this man's seditious followers are.

Luke XXII. 59

MARK XIV.—70. And they that stood by [came unto him, and] said again to Peter, Surely thou [also] art *one* of them; for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth *thereto* [*and* bewrayeth thee.] [MAT. XXVI.—73.]

Mark XIV. 70.

JOHN XVIII. 26. One of the servants of the high-priest (being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off) saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

And *one of the* domestic *servants of the high-priest*, *being a relation of his whose ear Peter had cut off*, pressed the charge home upon him, and *said*, How can you have the assurance to deny it? Take heed what you say: *did not I* myself *see thee in the garden with him?*

John XVIII. 26

MAT. XXVI. 74. Then [JOHN, Peter denied again, and] began to curse and to swear, *saying*, [LUKE, Man, I know not what thou sayest;] I know not

Then Peter, being terrified to the last degree to think of the danger to which he should be exposed if he was discovered to be the person that made the attack on the servant of the high-priest, which might in such a circumstance expose him even to capital punishment, *denied* it again

Mat. XXVI. 74

m *With an oath.*] Dr. *Clarke* conjectures that Peter was suffered to *fall fouler* than any of the rest of the *apostles* (except Judas the traitor), and to make more remarkable mistakes in his conduct, that we might thus be cautioned against that extravagant regard which would afterwards be demanded to him and his pretended successors. *Clarke's Seventeen Sermons*, No. 10. p. 236.

SECT. clxxxiv.

Mat. XXVII. 74

again more violently than ever; *and*, that he might not any more be called in question, he *began to curse and to swear*, and solemnly to imprecate the judgment of God upon himself if it were so; [*saying*] as he had done before, I tell thee, *man, I know not what thou meanest* by such a false and groundless accusation; *I do not* so much as *know this man of whom you speak*, and was so far from being in the garden with him, that I am absolutely a perfect stranger to him. *And* he had no sooner thus denied him in this shocking manner, but *immediately while he yet spake*, the words of Jesus were fulfilled, and, according to the warning he had given him, *the cock crew the second time* [n].

not [this] man [of whom ye speak]. And immediately [LUKE, while he yet spake] the cock crew [the second time.] [MARK XIV. 71, 72.—LUKE XXII. 60. JOHN XVIII. 27.

Luke XXII. 61

And Jesus having been examined by the council in a more retired room, was now brought back into the hall, while they were consulting what they should do with him, so that he stood within hearing when Peter thus ungratefully denied him; and hearing such shocking language from a voice so familiar to him, just as those dreadful words proceeded out of his mouth, *the Lord turned* about, *and looked upon Peter* with a mixture of earnestness and tenderness in his countenance, which, through the secret energy of the Spirit that went along with it, pierced him to the very heart: *and* then *Peter recollected the word of the Lord Jesus, how he had said to him* but that very evening, *Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.* (See Mark xiv. 30, p. 344.)

LUKE XXII. 61. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord [Jesus], how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow [MARK, twice], thou shalt deny me thrice. [MAT. XXVI. 75.—MARK XIV.—72.—]

62

And Peter could no longer bear the place, nor stand in the sight of his injured Master, but immediately *went out* [o] quite overwhelmed with grief and shame; *and covering* [*his head*] with his mantle [p], he seriously reviewed

62 And Peter went out, and [MARK, when he thought thereon he] wept bitterly.' [MAT. XXVI.—75. MARK XIV.—72.]

n *The cock crew.*] To reconcile this with what the Jews pretended, that all the cocks used to be removed out of Jerusalem at the time of the *passover*, some would render ὁ ἀλεκτὼρ ἐφώνησεν, *The watchman proclaimed the hour of the night*: but this is so unnatural an interpretation, that, rather than admit it, one would question the truth of that *Jewish tradition*; or conclude, that if the custom it asserts did prevail in Christ's time, some *cock* was accidentally left behind, or returned unobserved to this place. The hurry of such a night as this might have occasioned much greater neglects than this supposes.

o *And Peter went out.*] It is observable that Luke in two or three lines here calls him *three times* by the name of Peter; that memorable *name* which Christ had given him, with a particular view to that fortitude and resolution with which he was to defend the gospel: perhaps thereby intending to intimate *how low* this courageous hero was now fallen, and yet to what *a height* of holy magnanimity he was afterwards raised, and thereby enabled to stand as *a rock* in that sacred cause, and so fully to *answer the name* with which his Master had honoured him.

p *And covering his head* with his mantle.] Raphelius, and some learned *critics*, would render ἐκβάλων, *throwing himself out of the company* in a passionate manner, which it is very probable he did: but others, and

viewed that heinous crime in which he had discovered so much weakness and ingratitude; and when he attentively thought thereon, and entered into all its aggravating circumstances *he wept bitterly*, and most earnestly entreated the Divine pardon for so great and inexcusable a sin. SECT. CLXXXIV. Luke XXII. 62

IMPROVEMENT.

How loudly does this affecting story speak to us in the words of the apostle, *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall* (1 Cor. x. 12). *Peter* professed the warmest zeal; and gave his *Lord* repeated, and, no doubt, very sincere assurances of the firmest resolution in his cause; and yet, except *Judas* the traitor, none of his *brethren* fell so low as he. But a few hours before he had been with *Christ* at the sacred *table*, and had heard from his own lips those gracious *discourses* which, as echoed back from his word, do still strike so strongly on the heart of every true believer. He had just seen those words remarkably, and even miraculously, verified, that *Jesus having loved his own that were in the world, loved them to the end.* (John xiii. 1.) How reasonably then might it have been expected that *his own* should also have continued their most zealous and constant affection to him! But *Peter*, who, if possible, was more than doubly *his* as a *disciple*, as an *apostle*, as a distinguished *intimate*, most shamefully *denies him*; and that not only *once*, but a *second*, yea, and a *third* time, even with *oaths* and *curses*, as if he would by that diabolical language give a sensible proof that he did not belong to *Christ*: and who indeed, that had heard it, would have imagined that he did? Nay, to aggravate it yet farther, it was done in the presence of the *other disciple*, and even of *Christ* himself, who surely was much more painfully wounded by this perfidiousness of *Peter* than by all the rage and fury of his enemies. *Lord, what is man!* What is our boasted strength but weakness! and, and if we are left unto ourselves, how do our most solemn resolutions melt like snow before the sun! *Be thou surety for thy servants for good!* Psal. cxix. 122.) Mat. xxvi. 69—74 Mark xiv. 66—71 John xviii. 15, 16 Luke xxii. 61

The

and particularly *Elsner*, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 165, 166), and *Lambert Bos* (*Exercit.* p. 21, 22), with much better authority, would translate it, *covering his head*, which was a token of mourning and shame well becoming Peter on this occasion. (Compare 2 Sam. xv. 30. Esth. vi. 12. and Jer. xiv. 3, 4)—As for our version [*when he thought thereon*], I can find no passage in antiquity in which the word has such a signification; though to be sure that phrase expresses what was truly the case. I have therefore inserted it in the *paraphrase*, as I would take every opportunity of paying all due respect to so valuable a *translation* as ours is in the main.

SECT. CLXXXIV. Luke XXII. 61. *The Lord turned and looked upon Peter.* So may he graciously *look upon us* if we at any time make any approach towards the like sin! May he *look upon us* with a glance which shall penetrate our hearts, and cause *floods* of penitential *sorrow* to flow forth!

62 *Peter went out, and wept bitterly.* He quitted that dangerous scene where temptation had met and vanquished him; and chose retirement and solitude to give vent to his overflowing soul. Thus may we recover ourselves; or rather, thus may we be recovered by Divine grace from those slips and falls which in this frail state we shall often be making! Let us *retire* from the business and the snares of life; that we may attend to the voice of conscience, and of God speaking by it; and may so taste *the wormwood and the gall*, that our souls may long have them in *remembrance*. To conclude; let us express the sincerity of our *godly sorrow* by a more cautious and resolute guard against the occasions of sin, if we would not be found to trifle with God when we pray *that he would not lead us into temptation, but would deliver us from evil.*

SECT. CLXXXV.

Jesus is examined at the high-priest's hall, and afterwards condemned by the sanhedrim on confessing himself to be the Messiah. Mat. XXVI. 59—68. Mark XIV. 55—65. Luke XXII. 63, *to the end.* John XVIII. 19—23, 28.—

JOHN XVIII. 19,

SECT. CLXXXV. John XVIII. 19 WE now return to the examination of Jesus before the council, the thread of the story having been a little interrupted on the sad occasion of Peter's fall. *The high-priest therefore asked Jesus*, as he stood before him, *concerning his disciples, and concerning his doctrine;* what it was that he taught, and with what view he had gathered so many followers.

JOHN XVIII. 19, THE high-priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

20 *Jesus answered him*, and said, What I have taught has been delivered in the most public manner, and *I have spoke* it *openly* and freely *to the world; I have always*, as I had proper opportunity, *taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews continually resort* in the greatest numbers; *and have said nothing in secret*, even to my most intimate friends, but what has been perfectly agreeable to the tenor of my

20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing.

21 public discourses. *Why dost thou* therefore *ask me*, whose testimony in my own cause will not, to

21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard

heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

to be sure, be much regarded in such a circumstance as this, when I am standing as on a trial for my life? *Ask those that heard* [*me*], *what I have spoken to them* in the whole series of my ministry; for *behold they know* it, and I am willing to appeal to any impartial person among them as to the innocence, propriety, and usefulness, of *what I have said.* 21

SECT. CLXXXV. John XVIII.

22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high-priest so?

Such was the calm and rational reply which Jesus made to those that examined him. *But when he had spoken these things, one of the officers* belonging to the court, *who* then *stood by*, rudely *gave Jesus a blow*[a], *saying*, *Dost thou* presume to *answer the high-priest thus*, by sending him to others for a reply to his question? 22

23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?

And *Jesus*, with his usual mildness, *answered him*, *If* thou hast been one of my hearers, and canst say that *I* at any time *have spoken evil*, either of God or man, in the course of my preaching, thou wilt do well to *bear* thy *testimony concerning that evil*[b]: *but if* I have spoken *well*, *why dost thou strike me?* Can reason be answered by blows? or can such a sober appeal to it deserve them? 23

MAT. XXVI. 59. Now the chief priests and elders, and all the council, sought [for] false witness against Jesus,

Now the chief priests and the elders of the people, *and the whole sanhedrim*, with all its officers, not being able to make out a sufficient accusation against Jesus from such answers as these, maliciously endeavoured by the vilest means to have something criminal alledged against him; and as they were determined to condemn him, that they might colour over their proceedings with some form of law, they *sought for false evidence against Jesus, that they might put* 59

Mat. XXVI.

[a] *Gave Jesus a blow.*] As the word ῥαπισμα is supposed by many *etymologists* to be derived from ῥαβδος, *a staff*, or *stick*, Beza would therefore render it, *he smote him with a staff*: but the word is apparently used for *any blow*; and to limit it, as our *translators* do, to what we commonly call *a slap on the face*, does not seem reasonable; though Suidas explains it so; and Mat. v. 39. intimates it may have that sense.

[b] *If I have spoken evil*, either of God or man, in the course of my preaching, &c.] The pious and ingenious Mr. Bonnel (whose exemplary *life* deserves frequent reading, and whose *harmony* is in the main very judicious) is the only writer I have met with who seems to give the true sense of *this clause*. He urges the use of the word ελαλησα for *Christ's teaching* (ver. 20, 21), and observes, that *bearing witness* could not refer to the *answer* he had just made to the *high priest*; but might properly be used as to the course of his *preaching*, which the *high priest* had not heard. He also supposes that in Christ's appeal to his hearers the person who *smote* Christ was singled out by his eye, among others, as one who had been his auditor; and that the language of the *blow* was in effect as if he had said, "This is what I think your *preaching* deserves." But as he himself seems to assign another reason for this *blow*, even the pretended rudeness of the answer Christ had made to the *high-priest*, I have not followed Mr. *Bonnel* in my *paraphrase* on the preceding verse. See *Bonnel's Harmony*, p. 362.

[c] *Sought*

SECT. CLXXXV.

put him to death; and managed the trial in so partial and unjust a manner, that they did in effect invite any of the most infamous of mankind to come and depose against him, with the assurance of being favourably heard: *But they found none* that fully answered their purpose[c]; *for though many false witnesses came, [and] falsely testified against him, yet they found none* sufficient; [*for*] *the testimonies* they gave *did not* so far *agree* together, as that a capital sentence could be passed upon him on that evidence; since such a case required, at least, the concurrent oath of two persons. (See Deut. xvii. 6. xix. 15.)

Jesus, to put him to death. [MARK XIV. 55.]

60—But found none: [for] though many false witnesses came [*and* bare false witness against him,] yet found they none; [*for* their witness agreed not together.] [MARK XIV. 56.]

Mat. XXVI. 60

At last there came two false witnesses, [*who*], maliciously wresting some words he had formerly spoken relating to his own death and resurrection, *rose up, and falsely testified against him,* 61 *Saying,* upon their oaths, *This fellow said,* in our hearing, *I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it* up again *in three days:* and would any one talk of destroying it, unless he was an enemy to that holy place? or think of building it again so soon, unless he was in league with Beelzebub? [*Yea*] one of them, designing to aggravate the matter, confidently affirmed[d], *We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days* time *I will build* up *another*, which shall be *made without* the help of *hands*, in obedience to my command. *Yet neither thus did their testimony* exactly *agree*, nor was sufficient to convict him; as evidently appears from comparing the different words in which it was expressed: and as this difference was observed in court, they could not for shame proceed upon the evidence so as to

—60 At the last [there] came two false witnesses, [*who* arose, and bare false witness against him.] [MARK XV. 57.]

61 And said, This *fellow* said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

Mark XIV. 58

MARK XIV. 58. We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.

59 But neither so did their witness agree together.

[c] *Sought for false evidence,—but found none.*] As this was a great proof of *Christ's innocence* (for otherwise his confederates might have been glad to purchase their own security by impeaching him,) so it is a singular instance of the *power of God over men's minds*, that for all the rewards these great men could offer, no two consistent witnesses could be procured to charge him with any gross crime. Possibly the exertion of his miraculous power in *striking to the ground* those that were most forward to seize him, might intimidate the spirits of some who might otherwise have been prevailed upon.

[d] Designing to aggravate the matter, &c.] This is one instance, among many others, in which the *bow of malice* has been broke by overstraining it, and *innocence* cleared up by the very extravagance of those charges which had been advanced against it.—It is observable that the words which they thus misrepresented were spoken by Christ at least *three years* before. (Compare John ii. 19. Vol. VI. p. 138.) Their going back so far to find matter for the charge they brought was a glorious, though silent, attestation of the unexceptionable manner in which *our Lord* had behaved himself during all the course of his public ministry.

[e] *If*

to condemn Jesus to death for words which no two persons could pretend to ascertain; nor would they indeed have amounted to a capital crime if they had jointly been charged upon him. SECT. CLXXXV. Mark XIV. 58

LUKE XXII. 66. And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief priests, and the scribes came together, and led [Jesus from Caiaphas] into their council. [JOHN XVIII. 28.—]

However, they resolved to try him in full council, even on this slender evidence, hoping that some further discovery would arise in the process of the examination. *And* accordingly, *as soon as it was day*, after a very short recess, *the elders of the people, and the chief priests and the scribes*, who made up the sanhedrim, *assembled together; and they led Jesus away from* [*the house of*] *Caiaphas* the high-priest *to their council*, or to that magnificent chamber where their court used to sit for the dispatch of public business. Luke XXII. 66

MARK XIV. 60. And the high-priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee? [MAT. XXVI. 62.]

61 — But [Jesus] held his peace, and answered nothing. [MAT. XXVI. 63.—]

And, producing what imperfect evidence they had, to give some colour to their proceedings, while no regard was shewn by Jesus to such false and frivolous accusations, *the high-priest stood up in the midst* of the council, *and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? What is it that these men testify against thee?* Is it true, or false? *But Jesus*, knowing how vain it would be to plead for himself in so unrighteous a court, whose members came determined to condemn him, *was silent, and made no reply.* Mark XIV. 60 61

LUKE XXII. 67. [And they said,] Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, you will not believe.

And they said to him, Why art thou so much upon the reserve? Dost thou give up the pretensions thou hast formerly made, or dost thou still maintain them? *If thou art* indeed *the Messiah, tell us* plainly, and it will bring matters to a short issue[c]. *And he said to them, If I tell you* ever so plainly, I know that *you will not believe: And if I also ask* [*you*,] Wherefore it is that you persist in this unreasonable infidelity, *you* will only overbear me with renewed violence, and *will neither answer nor dismiss me.* Luke XXII. 67 68

68 And if I also ask *you*, you will not answer me, nor let *me* go.

MAT. XXVI.—63. And [again] the high-priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ

And again the high-priest answered and said to him, Think not that such evasions will suffice in an affair of such importance as this: thou knowest I have a way of coming at the certain truth, and therefore *I adjure thee* in the most solemn manner, *by* the name and authority of *the living God*, Mat. XXVI. 63

the

[c] *If thou art the Messiah, tell us.*] Probably these wretches hoped to gain a great advantage against Jesus either way: if he confessed it, they would condemn him on that confession; and if he denied it, they would expose him on that denial as afraid to maintain the pretensions he had made.

SECT. CLXXV.

God, whose high-priest I am, and to whom he has committed the power of administering this oath [f], *that thou tell us* directly, in the plainest terms *whether thou be the Messiah, the Son of the* ever-*blessed God*, or not?

Mat. XXVI. 63

64 *And Jesus* boldly *said to him, Thou hast said* [*right*,] and mentioned me by my true and proper title [g]; for *I am* indeed the Messiah, nor will I ever recede from that claim: and *moreover*, though you may now condemn me to death for asserting it, yet *I* solemnly *declare to you* all, That *hereafter* the day will come, when *ye shall see the Son of man*, who now stands in this despised and lowly form at your tribunal, exalted to all the dignity and glory which that high title imports, *sitting at the right-hand of the power* and majesty *of God, and coming* with irresistible strength *in the clouds of heaven*, to take vengeance on the proudest of his enemies [h].

the Son of [the blessed] God? [MARK XIV.—61.]

64 [And] Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: [I am:] nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sittting on the right-hand, [LUKE, of the power of God,] and coming in the clouds of heaven. [MARK XIV. 62. LUKE XXII. 69.]

Luke XXII. 70

And upon this, as they were willing to make sure of so important a confession, *they* pressed him with the question again, and *all said*, as in amazement, *Art thou then* really *the Son of God*, who is promised under the character of the Messiah? and wilt thou actually abide and stand by this profession, that thou art? *And he said to them*, I will never retract it; *ye say* right, and may be assured *that I am*.

LUKE XXII. 70. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.

Mat. XXVI. 65

Then the high-priest, with all the hypocritical forms of pious indignation, *rent his clothes*, as in grief for the great dishonour done to God by so false an oath [i], and so presumptuous a claim, as he pretended this to be; *and* he *said*, *He has* now *spoken* the most direct *blasphemy*, in professing himself to be the Son of the most high God; *What*

MAT. XXVI. 65. Then the high-priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. [MARK XIV. 63, 64.—]

[f] To whom he has committed the power of administering this oath.] That the *Jewish high-priests* had indeed such a power may appear from comparing Exod. xxii. 11. Lev. v. 1. and Prov. xxix. 24. xxx. 9.

[g] *Thou hast said right.*] See *note* i, Mat. xxvi. 25. sect. clxx. p. 288.

[h] *Ye shall see the Son of man*, &c.] There seems a plain reference here to the view in which *the Son of man* is represented, Dan. vii. 13, 14. where he is said to *come with the clouds of heaven* to receive a *dominion*, &c. or to appear, as God did on *mount Sinai* in a *chariot of clouds* attended by *angelic hosts*. *Our Lord* looked very unlike that person now: but nothing could be more awful, majestic, and becoming, than such an admonition in these circumstances.—Dr. *Whithy* excellently proves, in his *Note* on Mat. xxvi. 64. that *the right-hand of power* is a phrase equivalent to the *right-hand of God*.

[i] *Rent his clothes.*] Though the *high-priest* was forbidden to *rend his clothes* in some cases, when others were allowed to do it, (Lev. xxi. 10. yet in case of *blasphemy*, or any public calamity, it was thought allowable. (See 1 Mac. xi. 71. and *Joseph. Bell. Jud.* lib. ii. 15. § 2, 4.) Caiaphas therefore by this action expressed in the strongest and most artful manner his horror at hearing so vile a wretch, as he pretended Jesus was, thus claiming the sovereignty over Israel, and a seat at the *right-hand of God*, and this when *adjured upon oath* on so solemn an occasion.

[k] *They*

sect. clxxxv.

What further need have we of witnesses? Behold now you have heard his blasphemy with your own ears. *What think ye* therefore as to the punishment he deserves? *They answered and said, He is guilty of* the most notorious of all crimes, and deserves immediately to be put to *death*[k]; *what need have we* indeed *of any other testimony? for we ourselves have heard* [*it*] *from his own mouth. And* thus *they all condemned him as guilty of a capital crime;* and accordingly sentence was passed upon him, no witness appearing in his defence, and none daring to plead his cause[l]; though some of the council, who had a friendship for him, and particularly Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, disapproving these unrighteous proceedings, either absented themselves, or withdrew, (Compare Luke xxiii. 50, 51, and John xix. 38. sect. cxcii.)

Mat. XXVI.

66 What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death: [Luke, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.][And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.] [Mark XIV. —64. Luke XXII. 71.]

Then the men that attended the court, and *had Jesus in custody*, finding he was condemned by the sanhedrim, *insulted him* with renewed injuries and affronts, *and* carried that insolent usage yet further than they had done before;[m] for *some* of them with rude indignity *began* even *to spit in his face, and to buffet him; and others* scornfully abused and *beat him: And*, in derision of his title to the character he claimed, *having covered his eyes, the officers* and servants *struck him on the face with the palms of their hands*, and on the head with staves: *and*, in a scoffing and contemptuous manner, *asked him, saying,*

Luke XXII. 63.

Luke XXII. 63. [Then] the men that held Jesus, mocked him, [Mark, and some began to spit in his face,] [Mark, and to buffet him:] and [others] smote *him.* [Mat. XXVI. —67. Mark XIV. 65.—]

64 And when they had blind folded him, [Mark, the servants] struck him on the face [with the palms of their hands,] and asked him,

64

k *They answered and said, He is guilty of death.*] A man who did not know the mighty influence *of attachment to an hypothesis* by frequent observation, would be astonished that any *learned, accurate* and *candid writer*, should not be able to see the mark of *a judicial process* and *sentence* here; and yet should see them in the case of Stephen. Yet this is really the case.

l No witness appearing in his defence, *&c.*] Dr. *Samuel Harris*, in his *Observations on the Old Testament*, (p. 109. *& seq.* quarto edit.) has, with much greater learning and ingenuity than solidity, endeavoured to prove this circumstance referred to in Isaiah's words, chap. liii. 8. *Who shall declare his generation?* and his *first* and *second dissertation* prefixed to his *essay* chiefly centre in this point.

m Carried that insolent usage yet farther than they had done before.] Luke mentions these indignities *before* his being *led to the council*, in which he tells us he was examined *on oath*, as above: but Matthew and Mark mention them as immediately *succeeding* his being *condemned*, as guilty of *blasphemy* in the answer he made when *adjured* by the *high-priest*; and do not so particularly as Luke distinguish what happened in his *examination* at the *house of Caiaphas* from other subsequent circumstances. The attentive reader will observe how they are formed in our *compound text* into one consistent narration. I do not see it necessary to suppose that Christ answered to *two adjurations*, the one some hours after the other. Matthew and Mark naturally enough relate the whole of his *examination* together, though carried on in two different places; and it is probable some insults *preceded*, and others, yet more violent, *followed*, his being thus solemnly *condemned* by the *sanhedrim* as *guilty of death.*

SECT. CLXXXV.

saying, Now shew us how thou canst divine; and, if thou art indeed the true Messiah, *prophesy to us, O [thou] Christ, who is he that smote thee?* Such were the vile indignities they offered him, *and many other things they blasphemously spake against him*[n]: so that, on the whole, had he been the vilest malefactor, they could not have used him worse; and common humanity, even in that case, would not have allowed of such barbarous insults.

him, saying, Prophesy [unto us thou Christ,] who is it that smote thee? [MAT. XXVI. —67, 68. MARK XIV. —65.]

65 And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

Luke XXII. 64

65

IMPROVEMENT.

THUS was the patient *Lamb of God* surrounded by his bloodthirsty enemies: Thus did *the dogs encompass him*, and the *strong bulls of Bashan beset him on every side*; (Psal. xxii. 12, 16.) Thus was he *brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth*: (Is. liii. 7, 8.) *He was taken from judgment*, and suffered the worst kind of murder, even that which had the appearance of being legal. But those *gentle words* which he dropped in the midst of all the injuries which were offered him are surely worthy ever to be recorded and remembered. It had always been his care to *provide things honest in the sight of all men*: and as he answered with a most graceful and courageous appeal to all that heard him, as to the innocence and usefulness of his doctrine; so it is well worthy our observation and reflection that God so far restrained the rage and malice of hell, that no such *false witnesses* arose against him, as could on the whole asperse his character, or bring it under any brand of public infamy; though *Judas*, as well as others, might have sought a reward, or at least an indemnity, for their own villainy, in accusing him. And indeed it is no inconsiderable instance of God's providential government of the world, that wicked men are restrained by this one remainder of reverence for the Divine omniscience, and dread of his vengeance, from destroying the reputations and lives of his children; especially in countries where (as in our own) the *punishment* which human laws inflict on *perjury* is so much below its desert.

Luke XXII. 63--65

Mark XIV. 60, 61

John XVIII. 23.

Mat. XXVI. 59, 60

When *Jesus* was examined *on oath he witnessed a good confession*, and cited those that were now his *judges* to appear at *his bar*. Nor was it a vain boast! *The Son of man* is now *sitting at the right-hand of power*, and will ere long *come in the clouds of heaven*:

63, 64

[n] *Many other things they blasphemously spake against him.*] There is something very remarkable in this expression. They charged him with *blasphemy* in asserting himself to be *the Son of God*; but the *evangelist* fixes that charge on them, because he really was so.

heaven: and then *they* that *condemned*, and *insulted*, and *pierced* *him*, *shall mourn because of him*, (Rev. i. 7.) May we be now so *wise* as *to kiss the Son* in token of our humble allegiance to him, *lest he be* then justly *angry* with us: yea, lest *we* immediately *perish from the way, when his wrath is but beginning to be kindled!* (Psal. ii. 12.) SECT. CLXXXV.

SECT. CLXXXVI.

Jesus is brought before Pilate: The Jews demand judgment against him, and Pilate examines him. Mat. XXVII. 1, 2, 11—14. Mark XV. 1—5. Luke XXIII. 1—4. John XVIII. 28—38.

MAT. XXVII. 1.

[AND straightway] when the morning was come, all the chief priests [held a consultation with the] elders of the people, [and scribes, and the whole council,] against Jesus, to put him to death. [MARK XV. 1.—]

MAT. XXVII. 1.

SECT. CLXXXVI.

SUCH were the vile proceedings of this horrid and malignant night, and thus was Jesus condemned, and treated as a malefactor by the Jewish rulers. *And as soon as morning was come, all the chief priests*, having put Jesus out of the room where the sanhedrim met, *consulted with the elders of the people, and the scribes, and the whole sanhedrim*[a], what method they should take to execute this sentence they had passed *against Jesus*, and *how* they might contrive *to put him to death* in the most severe and contemptuous manner. Mat. XXVII. 1

2 And when they had bound him, [LUKE the whole multitude of them arose, and] they led *him* away, [JOHN, unto the hall of judgment], and delivered

And after he had been insulted by the servants at the council-chamber, *when* for the greater security *they had bound him* again[b], *the whole multitude of them arose, and led him away* from thence *to the prætorium* (as it was properly called) or to the judgment-hall, in which the Roman magistrate was used to sit for the dispatch of public business: for the Jews being now a conquered people, and not having the power of life and death in their hands, they could not execute Jesus without a warrant from the 2

a *All the chief priests consulted*, &c.] Many *critics* explain this of their adjourning to consult together, from the *house of Caiaphas*, to the *place* where the *sanhedrim* used to meet: but it appears from Luke this was the *place* where they had before assembled and passed sentence upon Jesus after his *first examination* in the *house of Caiaphas*; and his account of this matter is so circumstantial, that I think it more reasonable to take these words in the order in which they are explained in the *paraphrase*. Compare Luke xxii. 66, page 371.

b *When they had bound him* again.] They *bound* him when he was first apprehended, but had, perhaps, loosed him while he was under examination: or else they now made *his bonds* stricter than before, that so they might secure him from any danger of a rescue or escape as he passed through the streets of Jerusalem.

c Not

SECT. clxxxvi.

the Romans[c]; *and* therefore, to procure their order for his death, as well as to render it the more ignominious and painful, they determined immediately to carry him to them; and to ask, not a confirmation of the sentence which they had passed upon him as a blasphemer, but a new sentence of crucifixion against him, as a seditious enemy to Cæsar's government. Accordingly, having conducted him to the prætorium, they in a solemn way *delivered him*, as a state prisoner of considerable importance, *to Pontius Pilate the* procurator or *governor*, whom Tiberius Cæsar had, some years before this, sent among them.

delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. [MARK XV.--1. LUKE XXIII.1. JOHN XVIII. —28.—]

Mat. XXVII. 2

John XVIII. 28

And though by this time it was broad daylight, yet *it was* very *early* in the morning, *and* much sooner than the governor used to appear: he was therefore called up on this extraordinary occasion, but *they themselves went not into* the palace, of which *the judgment-hall* was a part, because it was the house of a Gentile, and they were apprehensive *lest they should be polluted, and* so *prevented from eating* those sacrifices which were offered on this first day of unleavened bread, and were looked upon as a very considerable part of *the passover*, of which the paschal lamb, which they had eaten the evening before, was only the beginning.

JOHN XVIII.—28. And it was early, and they themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

29 *Pilate therefore*, willing in this instance to oblige the heads of the nation he governed, complied

29 Pilate then went out

c Not having the power of life and death in their hands, &c.] That the *Jewish sanhedrim* had a power of *trying and condemning men* for crimes which the *Jewish law* made capital, cannot I think be doubted, and has all along been taken for granted in this work: and since the publication of the *first edition* it has been abundantly confirmed by Mr. *Biscoe's* learned and elaborate dissertation on the subject, in his *Sermons at Boyle's Lecture*, chap. vi. part i. p. 123, *& seq.* But that they had at this time a power of *executing such sentences* without the express *consent* of the *Roman governor*, neither Mr. *Manne's* remarks (*Essay* i. p. 13—19), nor Mr. *Biscoe's* much larger argumentation, seem to me satisfactorily to prove. I still think what Dr. *Lardner* has written on the other side of the question unanswerable; and indeed wonder that any can doubt of the matter after reading this story. For surely nothing but a sense of *necessity* could, on the whole, have brought the *Jewish rulers* to Pilate on this occasion; since the rendering *the execution itself precarious* would have balanced the argument their cruelty might find, in the contingency of its being *more painful*, if it should in fact be obtained. Compare John xviii. 31, p. 377. (See Dr. *Lardner's Credib.* part i. book i. chap. 2, § 5, 6, Vol. I. p. 65—106, and *Joseph. Antiq. Jud.* lib. xx. cap. 9 (al. 8.) § 1.) And indeed the *Jewish writers* own that no such power was exercised by the *sanhedrim* for forty years before the destruction of the temple, as Dr. *Lightfoot* shews by several quotations from the *Talmud* (*Hor. Heb.* on Mat. xxvi. 3, and John xviii. 31.) though he supposes it was only lost by their disuse of it, and was not taken from them by the Romans.—The chief arguments for their having such a power (from Mat. xxvi. 66. John viii. 33. xviii. 31. Acts vii. 57, 58. xii. 2. xxii. 4, 5. xxiii. 27. xxiv. 6. xxvi. 10.) are either directly answered in the *notes*, or obviated in the *paraphrase*, on those places.

d *A notorious*

out unto them and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

plied so far with their religious scruples that, leaving the prætorium, he *came out* of his house *to them*; and finding it was an affair of solemnity, he erected his tribunal in an open place adjoining to it, as the Roman magistrates often did: *and* when Jesus was presented as a prisoner before him, Pilate *said* to them, *What accusation do you bring against this man?* SECT. CLXXXVI. John XVIII. 29

30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

They answered and said to him, with some indecent smartness in the expression (the consequence of a secret indignation to find themselves curbed by a superior power), We could not but have hoped you were so well acquainted with the sanctity of our court, and the integrity of our character, as to conclude, that *if this* man *were not a notorious offender*[d], *we would not have* brought and *delivered him to thee*; for as we would be far from any thought of punishing an innocent man, so if his crime had not been very great, we might have dealt with him ourselves without thy concurrence. 30

31 Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law.—

Then Pilate said to them, Take ye him back to your own court again, *and judge him according to your law*; for I am by no means desirous of interfering with you in the regular exercise of your judicial power. And this he said with a view of shifting off from himself an affair to which in the general he could be no stranger[e]; and which he easily saw would be attended with many perplexing circumstances. 31

—The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.

Then the Jews said to him again, You well know that *it is not* now *lawful for us to put any man to death* without your concurrence (compare Mat. xxvii. 2, p. 576): but it is a capital crime

d *A notorious offender.*] So I render κακοποιὸς in this connection, because they had still the power of inflicting slighter punishments; so that their bringing him to Pilate was a proof that they judged him to have incurred a *capital sentence*. The word *malefactor* has much the same sense in our ordinary speech.

e With a view of shifting off from himself, &c.] Pilate could not be entirely ignorant of the case before him; for he began his government at Jerusalem before Jesus entered on his public ministry; and, besides many other extraordinary things which he must formerly have heard concerning him, he had, no doubt, been informed at large of his *public entrance* into Jerusalem the beginning of the week; and also of his *apprehension*, in which the *Jewish rulers* were assisted by a *Roman cohort*, which could hardly be engaged in that service without the *governor's* express permission. It plainly appears by his whole conduct how unwilling he was to engage in this cause; he seems therefore cautious not to enter into the full sense of what the *Jewish rulers* intended when they called him *a malefactor*; and answers them in ambiguous language, which they might have interpreted as a warrant to execute Christ, if they found it necessary, and yet, which would have left them liable to be questioned for doing it, and might have given him some advantage against them; which a man of his character might have wished. *Their reply* shews they were more aware of this artifice than *commentators* have generally been.

f *And*

SECT. CLXXXVI.

crime of which the prisoner here before you is convicted, and as, after a fair trial, he has received such a sentence in the sanhedrim, we only wait your warrant to proceed to execution.

John XVIII. 31

Luke XXIII. 2

And, as Pilate could not but inquire of what crime he had been convicted, they resolved to mention that charge which might render him most obnoxious to the Roman power, and to represent the matter in its most malignant view; and accordingly *they began* with great violence *to accuse him, saying*, It is not merely on a religious account that we have brought him before you, but *we have* also *found this* seditious [*fellow*] *perverting the* whole Jewish *nation*, from one end of the country to the other, *and* in effect *forbidding to pay tribute to Cæsar*, by *saying, that he himself is Messiah, a King*, whom many of the Jews have expected to rescue them from all subjection to a foreign power: and this claim he has had the assurance to avow in open court; so that it is but a necessary piece of respect to thee, and to the emperor, whose lieutenant thou art, to bring him hither to be condemned, and indeed to leave him to be executed by you.

LUKE XXIII. 2. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cesar, saying, that he himself is Christ, a King.

John XVIII. 32

And though they aimed at nothing more by this than to make sure of their murderous designs, and to add new circumstances of shame and agony to the execution, yet Providence was pleased to over-rule it with a wise intent, *that the saying of Jesus might* thus *be fulfilled, which he spake* more than once (see John iii. 14. xii. 32, 33. and Mat. xx. 19.) *signifying* or implying *by what* kind of *death he should die*, even by being lifted up from the earth, or by crucifixion, which was a Roman punishment; whereas according to the Jewish law (Lev. xxiv. 16.) he would have been stoned (as his servant Stephen afterwards was), having been impiously adjudged by them to have deserved death as a blasphemer. (Compare Mat. xxvi. 65, 66, and Mark xiv. 64, p. 362.)

JOHN XVIII. 32. That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

Mat. XXVII. 12

And when he was thus *accused by the chief priests and elders*[t], who aggravated the matter by the addition *of many* other *things*, either entirely false, or grossly misrepresented; reproaching him as a blasphemer, a sabbath-breaker, and a magi-

MAT. XXVII. 12. And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders [of many things], he answered nothing. [MARK XV. 3.]

[t] *And when he was* thus *accused*, &c.] The reader may perhaps observe that I have transposed Mat. xxvii. 11, and Mark xv. 2. But it is only because I think the other *evangelists* relate the story in such an *order*, as to shew the propriety of this little *transposition*.

a magician; and, in a word, omitting nothing which they thought might blacken his character, *he made* them *no answer* at all. *Then Pilate said to him, Dost thou answer nothing* to all this? *Hearest thou not* the several charges they produce against thee, or hast thou no concern to vindicate thyself from what they have alledged? *Behold*, and consider, *how many* and how great *things they witness against thee. But still*, as *Jesus* knew how little all his apologies would signify, he continued silent, and *did not answer him to any one word; so that Pilate the governor was greatly astonished*, and knew not how to account for so uncommon a behaviour.

SECT. CLXXXVI.

Mat. XXVII. 13 14

13 Then saith Pilate unto him, [Answerest thou nothing?] Hearest thou not? [Behold] how many things they witness against thee. [MARK XV. 4.]

14 And [Jesus yet] answered him to never a word, insomuch that [Pilate] the governor marvelled greatly. [MARK XV. 5.]

But yet, as the governor had heard an honourable report of Jesus, and observed in this silence an air of meek majesty and greatness of spirit, rather than any consciousness of guilt or any indication of a fierce contempt, he was willing to discourse with him more privately before he proceeded farther. *Pilate therefore entered again into the prætorium*, which he had quitted to oblige the Jews (ver. 29, p. 576), *and called Jesus* in: *and* [*as*] *Jesus stood before the governor there, Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou* indeed *the king of the Jews*, and dost thou really pretend to any right to govern them?

John XVIII. 33

JOHN XVIII. 33. Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus; [and Jesus stood before the governor,] [LUKE, and Pilate asked him, saying,] Art thou the king of the Jews? [MAT. XXVII. 11.—MARK XV. 2.—LUKE XXIII. 3.—]

Jesus answered him, Dost thou say this of thyself, from the knowledge of any seditious practices which thou hast ever observed in me? *or* is it only what thou hast gathered from the present clamour made against me, and *have others told it thee concerning me?*

34

34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

Pilate immediately *replied, am I a Jew?* or do I know any thing of your peculiarities, further than I am informed by others? I do not at all pretend to it: but thou knowest that *thine own nation, and* those who are esteemed the most sacred persons in it, even *the chief priests* themselves, *have delivered thee to me* as a malefactor, and have charged thee, among other crimes, with treason against Cæsar, in setting up for king of the country: tell me therefore freely *what hast thou done* to deserve such a charge? for the more frank thou art in thine acknowledgment, the greater favour mayest thou expect.

35

35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation, and the chief priests, have delivered thee unto me: What hast thou done?

Jesus answered him, *My kingdom is not of this world*, nor is it my business or design to erect a temporal

36

36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom

SECT. CLXXXVI.

temporal dominion, and to establish any claim which should at all interfere with that of Cæsar, or of which any prince has reason to be jealous. Indeed if I would have entertained such views,

John XVIII. 36 I might have found support and encouragement from the very persons who are now my accusers: and *if* I had asserted that *my kingdom was of this world*, and had favoured such methods of defence, *my servants*, who professed of late so great and so public a regard to me, *would* resolutely *have fought, that I might not have been delivered to the Jews*[g], or would attempt even now to rescue me out of their hands: *but now my kingdom is not from hence*, nor to be erected here; and therefore I have been so far from arming my followers with secular weapons, that the guard who came to apprehend me know I forbad their making use of those they had.

kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews,; but now is my kingdom not from hence.

37 *Pilate therefore said to him*, Thou speakest however of thy kingdom and thy subjects: *art thou then* really *a king?*

37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then?—

And Jesus answered him and said, therein courageously witnessing a good confession (1 Tim. vi. 13), *Thou sayest [right]; I am* indeed, as thou hast said, *a King;* the king of the Jews, and the appointed Head and Governor of the whole Israel of God; nor will I ever basely seek my safety by renouncing my Divine claim to the most excellent majesty and extensive dominion: nay, *for this purpose was I born, and for this end I came into the world* from another and much better abode, *that I might bear witness to the* cause of *truth* in general; and in particular to this great and fundamental branch of it: and I have given such ample proof of this, that *every* honest and well-disposed *person, who is* indeed a friend *of the truth, heareth my voice*, and

—[And] Jesus answered [LUKE, him, and said], Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. [MAT. XXVII.—11. MARK XV.—2. LUKE XXIII.—3.]

g *My servants would have fought*, &c.] Though *our translation* of ηγωνιζοντο may be more literal, yet, considering that *our Lord* was now actually in the hands of his enemies, I think it plain that it is to be taken in such an extent. It may be objected, that the number of *Christ's disciples*, had all the *five hundred* been assembled in arms, could have been no match for the Jewish and Roman power at Jerusalem. But it is to be remembered, that (as Dr. *Lardner* with his usual good sense observes) the *populace* appeared zealously on Christ's side but a few days before; and the reason of their turning against him was his not assuming a *temporal kingdom*, as they certainly expected he would have done. (See *Lardn. Credib.* part i. book i. chap. 5, Vol. I. p. 501.) And we may farther add, that a very small body of forces, under a leader endowed with such miraculous power as Jesus lately exercised, might have been sufficient to vanquish all the Roman legions. Compare *note* i on John vi. 14, Vol. VI. p. 416.

h *Every*

and pays an entire deference to my instructions [h]. SECT. CLXXXVI.

38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith [to the chief priests, and *to* the people], I find no fault at all [in this man.] LUKE XXIII. 4.]

John XVIII. 38

Pilate says to him, What is the *truth* which thou referrest to, and speakest of as thy business to attest? *And when he had said this,* as Jesus made a pause, and did not immediately make him any answer, his hurry would not allow him to wait for it: so *he went out again to the Jews, and said to the chief priests, and the people* assembled with them abroad, I have examined the prisoner you brought me in private; and I must freely declare that *I find no fault at all in this man,* nor can I perceive that he is any enemy either to the rights of Cæsar, or the tranquility and happiness of the Jews; and therefore do not see how I can with any justice condemn him to die. But his accusers refused to acquiesce in this, and advanced a more circumstantial charge against him, which gave occasion to that examination before Herod, which will be related in the next section.

IMPROVEMENT.

How much exactness in the ceremonials of religion may be found in those who have even the most outrageous contempt for its vital principles and essential duties! Yea, how much of that exactness may be made subservient to the most mischievous and diabolical purposes! These *wolves in sheep's clothing* would not *enter into the house* of a heathen, *lest they should be polluted,* and become unfit to *eat the passover;* yet they contrive and urge an impious murder, which that very *heathen,* though he had much less evidence of *Christ's* innocence than they, could not be brought to permit without strong reluctance, and a solemn, though vain transferring of the guilt from himself to them. 28

Justly might *our Lord* say in the words of *David, They laid to my charge things which I knew not;* (Psal. xxxv. 11.) But what can defend the most innocent and excellent against malicious slanders and defamations! Or who can expect, or even wish, wholly to escape, when such *accusations* are brought against *Christ,* even by the *rulers* of his nation, who should have been men of distin- Luke xxiii. 2.

h *Every person who is* a friend *of the truth heareth my voice.*] What *our Lord* here says incidentally is to be regarded as an universal maxim; *all sincere lovers of the truth will hear him:* and accordingly St. John, with all simplicity, depending on the evidences which he and his brethren had given of their mission from Christ, lays down the same test. 1 John iv. 6. *We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us.*

SECT. CLXXXVI. distinguished generosity and honour! But instead of this they were all *an assembly of murderers*, and *lay in wait for their prey*, like so many devouring *lions*.

Mat. xxvii. 12. *Pilate* would renew the *examination* of the cause; and so far he acted a cautious and an honourable part. Yet, alas, how many that set out on such maxims want courage and resolution

John xviii. 29—33. to pursue them! But the courage of *Christ* never failed. He *witnessed before Pontius Pilate* the *good confession* we have now been
37 reading (1 Tim. vi. 13); and owned himself *a King*, though at the same time he declared (what it were to be wished all his followers had duly regarded) that *his kingdom is not of this world*. Greatly do we debase it, if we imagine it is; and most unworthy
36 is it of those that call themselves *the ministers of his kingdom* to act as if they thought it was. Yet such is the wickedness of some, and such the blindness of others, in the *Roman church*, that, though of all the churches in the world it is manifestly the most *secular kingdom*[i], it arrogates to itself the name not only of a part, but of the whole, of *Christ's kingdom* here below.

Christ came to bear witness to the truth; and a careful attendance to his testimony will be the best proof we can give that we
37 love *the truth*, and the best method we can take to make ourselves acquainted with it. And of so great importance is *the truth*, that it surely deserves the attentive inquiry and the zealous patronage of the greatest and the busiest of mankind. Let us not therefore, when we begin to ask *what it is* like *Pilate*,
38 hurry on to some other care before we can receive a satisfactory answer; but joyfully open our minds to the first dawnings of that celestial day, till it shine more and more to irradiate and adorn all our souls. On the whole, imperfect as the character of this unhappy governor was, let us learn from him candidly to confess *the truth*, so far as we have discovered it; let us learn more steadily than he to vindicate the innocent and worthy, and on no terms permit ourselves, in any degree, to do harm to those

Luke xxiii. 4. in whom, on a strict and impartial inquiry, we can *find no fault*.

i It is manifestly the most *secular kingdom.*] This Mr. Boyse of Dublin has finely illustrated in his most ingenious discourse on these words.

SECT.

SECT. CLXXXVII.

Pilate sends Jesus to Herod, who, having treated him with great contempt, sends him back again. Pilate in vain endeavours to persuade the Jews to consent to his release, who impiously prefer Barabbas, and persist in their demands of a sentence of crucifixion against Jesus. Mat. XXVII. 15—18, 20—23. Mark XV. 6—14. Luke XXIII. 5—23. John XVIII. 39, *to the end.*

LUKE XXIII. 5.

AND they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

LUKE XXIII. 5.

IT was observed in the preceding section, that when Pilate came out of the palace he bore an open testimony to the innocence of Jesus, and declared to the priests, in the presence of the people, that "he found no fault at all in him:" *but they* not only continued strongly to urge their accusation, but *were more violent* than before, *saying*, We assuredly know that *he stirs up* all *the people, teaching* the most dangerous and seditious doctrines *throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee*, that factious country, where he has been most busy, and from thence making a progress *even to this place*, and gathering up followers every where by the way, to the apparent danger and damage of the state. SECT. CLXXXVII. Luke XXIII. 5

6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean.

And when Pilate heard them speak *of Galilee*, 6 *he* presently *inquired if the man* whom they had brought before him *was a Galilean.*

7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself was also at Jerusalem at that time.

And 7 *finding that he was of* that country, and therefore that he properly belonged to *Herod's jurisdiction*, who was tetrarch of Galilee, *he* willingly embraced this opportunity to clear himself of so perplexing an affair, and immediately *sent him* away *to Herod*[a], *who* being *himself* a Jew, *was also at Jerusalem in those days*, having come up to celebrate the passover there.

8 And when Herod saw

And when Herod saw Jesus he rejoiced exceed- 8 *ingly;*

[a] *He sent him to Herod.*] It may not be improper, for the sake of those who are less acquainted with the *Jewish history*, to observe, that this was Herod Antipas, the *tetrarch* of Galilee, by whom *John the Baptist* had been beheaded, and whom Christ had justly represented as *a fox*. (Luke xiii. 32, p. 17.) He was *son* to *Herod the Great*, under whom Christ was born: and *uncle* to Herod Agrippa (by whom James was beheaded, and Peter imprisoned), who was *eaten by worms* (Acts xii. 2, 3, 23); and *great uncle* to that Agrippa who was by Paul's discourse *almost persuaded to become a Christian* (Acts xxvi. 28).——Christ's arraignment before him, when he was sent back uncondemned, was a great additional proof of the falsehood of those accusations which the Jews had brought against him as a seditious person, and particularly as one who had *stirred up the people* in Galilee.

SECT. CLXXXVII.

Luke XXIII. 8

ingly; for he had a long time been very desirous to see him, because he had heard much concerning him in Galilee (compare Luke ix. 7, 9. sect. lxxvii.) *and he* now *hoped* that he should have an opportunity so far to satisfy his curiosity as *to see some miracle done by him*, and might be able also to determine whether he was, as he had once suspected, John the Baptist risen from the dead.

saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

9 (Compare Mat. xiv. 2. Vol VI. p. 404.) *And he examined him in many words*, concerning a variety of particulars, both as to his pretensions and the proof of his mission, as well as the tenor of his doctrine: *but* as Jesus knew this was not a proper time and circumstance to enter into those questions, of which Herod might long ago have been sufficiently informed, *he made him no answer.*

9 Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.

10 *And the chief priests and scribes*, whose malice had prompted them to attend him thither, *stood* in the presence of the king, *eagerly accusing him* of the same crimes which they had before charged him with in their application to Pilate.

10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.

11 *And Herod, with* those of *his soldiers* who now attended him as his life-guard, looked upon Jesus with disdain, and *treated him in a very contemptuous manner*, like a poor inconsiderable creature, who no way answered the account they had heard of him, neither saying nor doing any thing to gratify their curiosity; *and having derided* [*him*] for pretending to be a king (as it was urged by his accusers he had done), in public contempt of that claim, whatever it was, Herod *clothed him with a splendid robe*[b], *and sent him back to Pilate*; thereby intimating, that he left him to do what he pleased with his prisoner, but that for his own part he apprehended his pretensions to royalty worthy of derision rather than serious resentment.

11 And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked *him*, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

12 *And*, whatever Pilate's real intentions were, the compliment of sending Jesus to be examined by him, was so well taken by Herod; and Herod's sending him back to the Roman governor was,

12 And the same day

[b] *A splendid robe.*] This expression Εσθητα λαμπραν does not so properly signify (as Le Clerc renders it) *a white robe*; nor was it, as he supposes, intended as a declaration of his *innocence*. It was rather some *gorgeous garment* which belonged to Herod or some of his *officers*, and was, perhaps, grown old, and they clothed him with it in *derision* of his having pretended to be *a king*. This usage was exceeding insolent: perhaps the remorse of conscience which Herod had felt on account of the murder of *John the Baptist* might render him cautious how he joined in any attempt on the life of Jesus, which we do not find that he did.

day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themselves.

was, on the other hand, such a public instance of regard to him; that *the same day Pilate and Herod became friends*, and were reconciled *to each other: for before* this, *they were at enmity between themselves*[c]. SECT. CLXXXVII. Luke XXIII. 12

13 And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, and the rulers, and the people,

And Pilate, having received an account of what had passed before Herod, *called together the chief priests, and the rulers, and* with them the rest of *the people* who had appeared against him as his accusers; 13

14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him;

And *said to them, You have brought me this man*, Jesus of Nazareth, *as one that has perverted the people*, and taught doctrines injurious to your religion, and also to the civil peace and the Roman government; *and behold, I have examined* [*him*] both *in your presence*, and in private, *and* heard all that could be alledged against him; but I must solemnly declare that I *have found no crime in this man as to the things that you have charged him with*; nor can I in my conscience think that you have made good any of the accusations you have brought against him: 14

15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him, and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.

Nor yet has Herod been able to make any such discovery; *for I sent you to him* with the prisoner, that you might do your utmost to convict him before that prince, who being a person of your own religion, and well acquainted with your laws and customs, might have known more of the matter than myself; *and* yet *behold*, it appears to have been Herod's judgment, that *nothing worthy of death has been done by him*[d], for, instead of sending him back like one who deserves a capital sentence, he has treated him like an idiot rather than a traitor, so as plainly to shew that he thinks him merely the object of ridicule, or to deserve at most but some slight punishment. 15

16 I will therefore chastise

And *therefore, when I have chastised him* by scourging, which will be an 16

c *They were at enmity between themselves.*] The cause of this *enmity* can only be conjectured: perhaps it might be *the slaughter* which Pilate had made of some of the Galileans who had come up to *sacrifice* at Jerusalem. (See Luke xiii. 1, sect. cxvi.) But Mons. *Saurin* truly observes, that, considering on the one hand the jealousy of the Jews where any foreign power was concerned, and on the other the oppressive measures generally taken by those who are invested with commissions like this which Pilate bore over conquered countries, and especially the accounts we have of his own bad character and conduct, their *reconciliation* is much more wonderful than their *enmity*. See *Saur. Serm.* Vol. X. p. 246, 247.

d *Nothing worthy of death has been done by him.*] The phrase πεπραγμενον αυτω must here have this signification, as the *margin* of our *Bible* renders it; for though this is something of an unusual construction, yet as *Raphelius* (*Annot. ex Polyb.* p. 259) has produced many instances of the like nature, it would be much harsher to suppose that *a capital sentence*, or any treatment from Herod which should intimate he thought Jesus deserved it, should be called αξιον θανατου, *something worthy of death.*

e *Usual,*

SECT. CLXXVII.

an admonition to him for the future not to use those wild enthusiastical expressions which have given so much umbrage and suspicion, *I will let* [*him*] *go:* and I believe you may depend upon it that he will give us no farther trouble; nor would he have interest enough to do it if he were inclined to the attempt.

chastise him, and release *him.*

Luke XXIII. 16

Mark XV. 6

Now it was usual at the feast of the passover, [*and*] even was grown by custom in a manner *necessary*[e], *for the* Roman *governor*, when such multitudes were assembled from all parts, *to release to the people* any *one prisoner, whom they desired* to be set at liberty, whatever crime it was

7 that he was charged with. *And there was then* in Pilate's custody *a* very infamous and *noted prisoner, whose name was Barabbas, that lay bound with some* other ruffians *who had made an insurrection in the city* in conjunction *with him*, and *who had* also *committed murder in the insurrection; and*, besides the part he had acted in this seditious riot, *he was* a fellow of a most abandoned character, and known to be *a robber*, who had infested the highways with his villainy; so that it was generally concluded he would receive sentence of death, and would be executed

8 that day. *And*, as the power of reversing or executing such sentences then lay in the Romans, *the people therefore, when they were gathered together* about the tribunal, *began with* a great noise and *clamour to demand* of Pilate [*that he would do*] at this passover *as he had always done to them* upon the like occasions, and would discharge a prisoner.

9 *And Pilate* hoping that he might preserve the life of Jesus, whose innocence he so clearly saw, determined to attempt it by this method; and accordingly, that he might induce them to choose him, he proposed no other alternative than that scandalous and outrageous criminal whom we have just now mentioned, and *answered them, saying, You have* indeed *a custom, that I should release to you one at the passover*, and I am ready now to oblige you in this affair: *whom will you therefore* choose *that I release unto you? Barabbas,*

MARK XV. 6. Now at that feast [the governor was wont] [LUKE, *and* of necessity he must] [release unto the people] one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. [MAT. XXVII. 15. LUKE XXIII. 17.]

7 And there was [then a notable prisoner] named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him [LUKE, in the city], who had committed murder in the insurrection [JOHN, *and* was a robber. [MAT. XXVII. 16. LUKE XXIII. 19. JOHN XVIII.—40.]

8 And the multitude [therefore when they were gathered together,] crying aloud, began to desire *him to do* as he had ever done unto them. [MATT. XXVII. 17.—]

9 But Pilate answered them, saying, [JOHN, Ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover:] [Whom] will ye [JOHN, therefore] that I release unto you? [Barabbas? or Jesus, which

[e] *Usual,—and* in a manner *necessary.*] There was no *law* to oblige him to this: but as *acts of grace* are generally popular things, this seems to have been first *freely used* by the Romans to please their *tributaries*, and now by *custom* was in a manner established. I find no substantial reason to believe there was in the original of this custom any reference to the deliverance of Israel from the *Egyptian bondage* at this time.

[f] *Whom*

which is called Christ,] the king of the Jews? [MAT. XXVII.—17. JOHN XVIII. 39.]

bas, that seditious and murderous robber? *or* this *Jesus, who is called Christ*, who in I know not what strange sense is pretended to be *the king of the Jews*, and whom you see before you in the fine robe in which Herod has thought fit to array him? SECT. clxxxvii. Mark XV. 9.

10 (For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.) [MAT. XXVII. 18.]

For he knew that the chief priests and rulers *had* not *delivered him up* into his hands from a regard to justice, but merely *out of envy* at his popularity; and therefore he was willing to make the proposal to the people in such a form as might be most likely to secure his life. 10

11 But the chief priests [and elders] moved [*and* persuaded] the people, that they should ask] that he should rather release Barabbas unto them, [and destroy Jesus.] [MAT. XXVII. 20.]

But the chief priests and elders, who were exceedingly solicitous to obtain their end, lest this artifice of the governor should defeat all their laboured scheme, *excited* the most forward of the people, [*and*] effectually *persuaded the mob* they had brought with them, *that they should ask* the governor, with a continual noise and clamour, *that he would rather release Barabbas to them*; that by this means the point they had in view might be secured, *and they might* be sure to *destroy Jesus*. *And* therefore when *the governor answered* them in this manner, *and said to them* again, Take notice that your choice lies only between these, and therefore now determine for yourselves, *which of the two do you desire I should release unto you? Then*, as their principles had prompted them, *they all cried out again with one consent*, in the same noisy and tumultuous way as before, *saying*, We will *not* have *this* [*man*], *but Barabbas*; *away with this* [*man*,] *and release unto us Barabbas*. And thus, when Pilate would have let him go, they denied the holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto them. (Acts iii. 14.) 11 Mat. XXVII. 21 Luke XXIII. 18

MAT. XXVII. 21. —The governor answered and said unto, them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?

LUKE XXIII. 18. And [JOHN, then] they [JOHN, all] cried out [JOHN, again] all at once, saying, [JOHN, Not this man, but Barabbas:] Away with this *man*, and release unto us Barabbas. [MAT. XXVII.—21. JOHN XVIII. 40.—]

And Pilate, to divert them from the purpose they were so unreasonably set upon, *again answered and said to them, What therefore would you have me do with* this *Jesus who is called Christ*, and *whom*, if I may believe your own rulers, so many of *you* are ready to *call* and own as *the king of the Jews*[f]? *And they all* presently renewed their clamour, and *cried out again*, as before, [*and*] with one voice *said to him*, Mark XV. 12. 13

MARK XV. 12. And Pilate answered, and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do [with Jesus, which is called Christ] whom ye call the king of the Jews? [MAT. XXVII. 22.]

13 And they [all] cried,

[f] *Whom you call the king of the Jews.*] Pilate often repeats *this title*: and it may seem strange that he should use it so frequently. Probably he might do it partly to ridicule those pretences, and bring contempt on the scheme of a Messiah; and partly to procure from the Jews, in their zeal against Jesus, the strongest and most public professions of their subjection to Cesar.

[t] *Let*

SECT. CLXXXVII

him, Crucify him; let him immediately *be crucified;* for he is fit to be treated as the vilest slave, rather than to be called our king [g].

Mark XV. 13 Luke XXIII 20 *Pilate therefore,* being still *desirous to release Jesus, spake to them* yet *again;* urging them seriously to consider what they did, in thus preferring such an abandoned miscreant as Barabbas to so innocent a person.

21 *But they,* without so much as offering any farther reason, persisted in their importunity, and *cried* out as before *saying, Crucify [him,] crucify him.*

22 *And Pilate,* was so intent on delivering him, that he *said to them a third time, Why* will you be so cruel as to insist upon it? *what evil has he done* [h]? I declare to you all, as I told you but now, (ver. 14, p. 385.) that *I have found no capital crime in him: I will therefore,* as I said (ver. 16.) *chastise him* by scourging, and then I hope your rage will be moderated, *and* you will be prevailed upon to agree that I should *let [him] go* without any farther punishment.

23 *But they,* without pretending to answer the argument he had alledged, overbore it by a wild fury, and *were urgent* in pressing him *with loud* and importunate *voices; and* the more he opposed them, *they cried out the more abundantly* and violently, *demanding that,* whatever was the consequence of it, *he might be crucified: and,* on the whole, notwithstanding the farther remonstrance of Pilate on the admonition of his wife (which will be mentioned in the next section,) *their voices, and [those] of the chief priests,* (who, to encourage the cry, had so little sense of common decency as themselves to join in it,) *prevailed* with the governor, though contrary to the convictions of his own conscience, to comply with their request.

cried out again, [and say unto him,] Crucify him: [Let him be crucified.] [MAT. XXVII.—22.

LUKE XXIII. 20. Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

21 But they cried, saying, Crucify *him,* crucify him.

22 And [MARK, Pilate] said unto them the third time, Why? what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let *him.* go. [MAT. XXVII. 23.—MARK XV. 14.—]

23 And they were instant with loud voices, [MARK, and cried out the more exceedingly,] requiring that he might be crucified: and the voices of them, and of the chief priests prevailed. [MAT. XXVII.—23. MARK XV. 14.]

IMPROVE-

[g] *Let him be crucified.*] By *this cry* they declared the greatest degree of rage that can be imagined; for it was as if they had said, "Let him whom you call *our king* be treated like one of the vilest of your *slaves,* who has committed the most enormous crime." To have inflicted such a punishment as this on any *free Jew* would probably have been sufficient to have thrown the whole city and nation into an uproar; but now they were deaf to every thing but the clamour of passion, and in their madness forgot with how dangerous a precedent they might furnish the Roman governor. And indeed it turned dreadfully on themselves, when such vast numbers of them were *crucified* for their opposition to the Romans, during the time of their last war. See *note* o in the *next* section, on Mat. xxvii. 25.

[h] *Why? what evil has he done?* Τι γαρ κακον εποιησεν; *Raphelius, (Annot. ex Xenoph.* p. 64. has well proved, that γαρ is often used by the correctest Greek writers, and particularly Xenophon, as an elegant *expletive,* especially to introduce a *question.*

IMPROVEMENT.

BEHOLD, how all imaginable circumstances seem to conspire to increase the *infamy* thrown on that *sacred head*, which now most worthily wears a crown of eternal glory! *Of a truth*, O Lord, *against thy holy Child Jesus, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles* and the chief priests, *and the people of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel had determined before to be done*, (Acts iv. 27, 28.) The wisest person on earth was by *Herod and his soldiers derided* as a fool: the most deserving was *condemned* by the *chief priests*: and the most innocent was treated as a criminal by *Pilate*, and furiously demanded as a public victim by the *Jews*. All the proofs of his innocence are overborne by a *loud* and senseless *cry*: and those *hosannahs* with which the streets and temple were so lately echoing, are exchanged into *Crucify him, crucify him*. So uncertain is human applause, and so unrighteous may human judgments be.

SECT. CLXXXVII. Luke XXIII. 7—10, 11, 21—23

But in the midst of all, the blessed *Jesus* stands collected in himself. Firm as a rock he bears the violence of the storm, and is not moved by all the furious waves that beat upon him; and when he saw *a robber* and *a murderer* preferred before him, and *a sentence* of the most cruel *death* clamorously called for and demanded against him, he silently *commits himself to him that judgeth righteously*, who ere long *brought forth* his *righteousness as brightness, and* his *salvation as a lamp that burneth*. (Compare 1 Pet. ii. 23. and Isa. lxii. 1.) Ver. 18, 19 Mark xv. 13, 14

Lord, if thou callest us out to share in thy sufferings, may *the Spirit of God and of glory* thus *rest on us!* And may neither the scorn nor the rage of our enemies separate us from thee, who did so courageously bear all this for us; nor may they ever sink us into any weakness of behaviour unworthy of those who have the honour to call themselves *thy followers!*

SECT. CLXXXVIII.

Pilate, having again and again renewed his efforts to persuade the Jews to consent that Jesus should be released, at length yields to their importunity, and delivers him up to be crucified. Mat. XXVII. 19, 24—31. Mark XV. 15—20. Luke XXIII. 24, 25. John XIX. 1—16.—

JOHN XIX. 1. THEN Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged *him*.

JOHN XIX. 1.

THEN, as the priests and people of the Jews continued their clamorous demand that Jesus should be crucified, *Pilate* thought it most advisable SECT. CLXXXVIII John XIX. 1

SECT. CLXXXVIII. advisable to seem at least to consent to it, and *therefore took Jesus and scourged him;* hoping that, after he had been severely scourged, the rage of the populace would be something abated, and they might at last be prevailed upon to consent that he should be dismissed.

John XIX. 1.

Mat. XXVII. 27. *Then the soldiers of the governor* [a], knowing that it was the Roman custom to scourge prisoners just before they were put to death, interpreted Pilate's order on this head as a declaration that he was immediately to be crucified: and therefore they *took Jesus* [*and*] *led him away into the common-hall* in Pilate's palace, which was *called the prætorium* (as being the place where the prætor, a Roman magistrate, used to keep his court;) *and* there they *gathered to him the whole band*, or cohort, to insult and torment him, not being concerned to keep any measures with a person whom they looked upon as entirely abandoned to their will. 28. *And having stripped him* of that splendid garment in which Herod had contemptuously dressed him, in order to vary the mockery and affront, *they* wantonly *clothed him in* a vest of imperial *purple*, [*and*] *put on him a scarlet robe* over it, that in this gaudy dress he might have something of a mock resemblance to a prince: 29. *And*, farther to ridicule his pretensions to royalty, which they considered as an affront to their nation and emperor, *the soldiers having* maliciously *platted a crown of thorns, put it upon his head* [b], *and* put *a* large *reed*, or cane, *into his right-hand*, to represent a sceptre: *and* then *they began* in a ludicrous manner *to pay their* homage and *salutations to him*, as to a new-created prince on his coronation-

MAT. XXVII. 27. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus *and* [led him away] into the common hall [called pretorium,] and gathered unto him the whole band *of soldiers.* [MARK XV. 16.]

28 And they stripped him, and [clothed him with purple, *and*] put on him a scarlet robe: [MARK XV. 17.—JOHN XIX. —2.]

29 And when [JOHN, the soldiers] had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right-hand: and they [began to salute him, *and*] bowed the knee before him, [*and* worshipped him,] and mocked him, saying, Hail,

a *Then the soldiers*, &c.] The *evangelist* John so plainly speaks of their *crowning our Lord with thorns*, and these other indignities, as *previous* to Pilate's last attempt to save him, that I think it proper to *transpose* those verses in Matthew and Mark, which mention these circumstances as *after his condemnation*, and immediately preceding the execution. Some of them might probably be repeated after Pilate had delivered him to be crucified, while the instruments of death were preparing; and therefore Matthew and Mark mention the whole series of these cruelties together: or the word τότε, *then* (which is used by Matthew,) may only signify that it was done *about that time*,) not determining the *order* of each particular so absolutely as to be inconsistent with the most accurate and distinct account which John gives of the whole process of this affair. Many instances of the *indeterminate* use of that *particle* occur in the *evangelists*: See Mat. ix. 14. xxiv. 40. Mark xiii. 14, 26. Luke xxi. 10, 21. and John xix. 16.

b *Having platted a crown of thorns*, &c.] It is certain they intended hereby to expose his *pretended royalty* to ridicule and contempt: but had that been all, *a crown of straws* might have served as well. They undoubtedly meant to add *cruelty* to their *scorn*, which especially appeared in their *striking him on the head* when this *crown* was put on.—If the best descriptions of the *eastern thorns* are to be credited, they are much larger than any commonly known in these parts.

c *Took*

Hail, king of the Jews: [JOHN, and they smote him with their hands:] [MARK XV. —17. 18—19. JOHN XIX. 2—3.]

coronation-day: [*and*] *bowing the knee before him, they did him reverence* in a scoffing way, *and mocked him, saying*, All *hail* thou most magnificent *king of the Jews!* Hail mighty Monarch! we give thee joy on thine accession to the crown! *and* then approaching him as if they would have offered him some present, as is usual on such occasions, *they smote him with their hands: And* proceeded so far as to *spit upon him*, even in his very face; *and* at last *took the reed*, or cane, out of his hand [c], *and* barbarously *struck him* with it *on the head;* and so, as it were, nailed down the thorns into his forehead and temples, and occasioned thereby exquisite pain, as well as a great effusion of blood: all which this holy Sufferer bore with the utmost meekness and composure, neither reviling nor threatening them, but silently committing himself to the righteous invisible Judge. (1 Pet. ii. 23.)

SECT. CLXXVIII. Mat. XXVII. 29, 30

30 And they [did] spit upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head. [MARK XV. 19.]

MAT. XXVII. 19. When he was set down on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

In the mean time Pilate was taken up with trying and condemning some other prisoners who were to be executed that day; *and while he* thus *was sitting on the tribunal* he had erected, *his wife*, having by this time been informed that Jesus had been brought before him, and was going to be given up to death, *sent* a very importunate message *to him* [d], *saying*, I beseech thee see to it, that thou *have nothing to do with* the blood of *that righteous One*, against whom the Jews are now demanding judgment; *for I have suffered many things to-day on his account in a dream* [e], and have had such terrible views represented to my imagination in my sleep this very

Mat. XXVII. 19

[c] *Took the reed*, or cane, out of his hand.] The word καλαμος does indeed sometimes signify *a slender reed*, (Mat. xi. 7. xii. 20. and 3 John, ver. 13) but it includes all kind of *canes*; and it is most probable this was *a walking-staff*, which they put into his hand as a sceptre, for *a blow* with a slight *reed* would scarce have been felt, or have deserved a mention in a detail of such dreadful sufferings.

[d] *His wife sent to him.*] While Rome was governed by a *commonwealth* it was unusual for the *governors* of provinces to take their *wives* with them; but afterwards it grew customary, and the motion made against it in the fourth year of Tiberius was rejected with some indignation. See *Tacit. Annal.* lib. iii. cap. 33, 34.

[e] *I have suffered many things to-day on his account in a dream.*] Perhaps the word σημερον, *to-day*, may imply, that she had *dreamt* these things *that morning*, since Pilate rose; and as the Heathens imagined those *dreams* most significant which came about *break of day*, she might on that account lay the greater stress upon them. Jansenius thinks she had now a representation of those calamities which afterwards befel Pilate and his family. (See *note* s in the *improvement.*) But it is an unaccountable thought of Mr. *Fleming*, that the *devil* might be the author of this *dream*, by which he might endeavour to prevent the *death* of Christ according to the *prophecies*. His two arguments, from her *calling Christ a man* (which is merely taken from *our version*, for in the *original* it is only τω δικαιω εκεινω, *that righteous One*), and from the *disquiet* which this *dream* gave her, are too inconsiderable to need a particular reply. See *Flem. Christol.* Vol. II. p. 325.

SECT. CLXXVIII. very morning, that I cannot but look upon it as something Divine; and conclude that if thou doest upon any terms consent to his death, it will be attended with dreadful consequences to thyself and thy family.

Mat. XXVII. 19

John XIX. 4. *Pilate therefore*, alarmed by such a message as this, went into the common-hall himself to see what they were doing with the prisoner; and when he beheld with strong emotion all those indignities and torments which Jesus had borne, and saw how severely the soldiers had scourged him, thinking that the sight of him in so sad a condition might move the Jews to compassion, he determined to make one trial more. And accordingly he *came out again* to the public tribunal where the Jews were assembled, *and* having ordered Jesus to be led thither, he *said to them*, just before he appeared, *Behold I am bringing him out to you* again, *that ye may know* and observe it, *that I* can *find no fault in him*, though the tortures he has now undergone are such as must surely have brought him to confession, if he were indeed guilty.

JOHN XIX. 4. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

5 *Then*, as he spake these words, *Jesus came out* of the prætorium *wearing the thorny crown, and the purple robe*, now also dyed in his own blood, which streamed forth from all parts of his body: *and* [*Pilate*] *said to them, Behold the man!* view him attentively; and when you see what dreadful things the poor unhappy creature has suffered, let that content you; for surely, considering his innocence, he has suffered already much more than enough.

5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold the man.

6 *When therefore the chief priests and* [*their*] attending *officers saw him*, fearing lest the people should relent, *they* presently renewed their exclamations, and eagerly *cried out* as before, *saying*, We know the man sufficiently: away with him to the cross; *crucify* [*him*], *crucify* [*him*]; and immediately order the wretch to be executed.

6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*.—

Pilate on this *said to them*, If ye are thus resolute and inexorable, I leave him in your hands, to dispose of him as you think fit: *take ye him* therefore, if it must be so, *and crucify* [*him*] yourselves; but I desire to discharge myself from having any thing to do in it, either by myself, or by my Roman guards; *for*, as I have told you again and again, *I find no fault in him* worthy of any such punishment.

—Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify *him*: for I find no fault in him.

The

SECT. CLXXXVIII.

John XIX. 7.

7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

The Jews then *answered him*, There is no room to represent him as a faultless person, nor any reason to be backward to condemn him; but these objections you have made oblige us to mention one circumstance which, for the horror of it, we would willingly have concealed: *we have a* Divine *law* which we received from heaven, by which blasphemy is forbidden on the highest penalties; *and by* this *our law he ought to die*, though he were not chargeable with sedition and treason, *because he has made himself the Son of* the most high *God*, in such a sense as no creature can be; and this he declared but this morning in open court. (Compare Mat. xxvi. 63, 64. Mark xiv. 62. and Luke xxii. 70, p. 372.)

8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

8 *When Pilate therefore heard this expression, he was* still *more afraid* than before[f]; for the Romans believed many poetical stories of men begotten by their deities, and thought them a kind of demi-gods, who could not be injured without engaging their divine parents in the quarrel. *And* therefore apprehending that his wife's dream might also take its rise from such a cause, *he entered again into the palace, and* taking him aside, he *said to Jesus*, Tell me plainly from *whence* thou camest, and from whom *art thou* descended? and what is this Divine original which thou art charged with claiming[g]? *But Jesus*, knowing that his innocence was already apparent, even to the conviction of Pilate's conscience, *gave him no answer* to that question.

9 And went again into the judgment-hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

Then

[f] *He was* still *more afraid* than before.] Though I think, with Mr. Cradock, and several others, the interpretation given in the *paraphrase* the most natural; yet I cannot forbear mentioning that of Dr. *Lardner*, who thinks *he was afraid* of a *sedition* among the Jews, from his knowledge of their great obstinacy in any thing in which *religion* might seem to be concerned: and he adds, he might be the more reasonably alarmed on this head, as since the beginning of his government he had met with *two* remarkable instances of their stiffness; *one* in an attempt he made to bring the *image* of Cæsar into Jerusalem; the *other* in a design he had formed of supplying the city with water at the expence of the *sacred treasury* of the temple. See *Lard. Credib.* part i. Vol. I. p. 330—338.

[g] *Whence art thou?*] It is strange Mr. *Locke* should think (as he does in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, Vol. I. p. 133.) that Christ declined giving him an *answer*, lest, when he heard he was *born* at Bethlehem, he should have any such apprehensions as Herod had entertained. Pilate probably knew nothing at all of that *prophecy*, as Herod himself indeed did not, till he had learnt it from the *Jewish scribes* whom he consulted on *Christ's birth*. (Mat. ii. 4, 5, 6, Vol. VI. p. 78.) The *answer* which *our Lord* had made to his former inquiries shewed how far he was from declining any danger; and the true reason of his present *silence* was that Pilate's unsteady conduct rendered him unworthy of any farther information.

SECT. clxxxviii.

John XIX. 10

Then Pilate in surprise *said to him*, What, *dost thou* make me no reply, and *not* so much as *speak to me* in such a circumstance as this, in which thy life is so evidently concerned? *Dost thou not know that I have power* and authority *to crucify thee, and have power to release thee*, if I please, notwithstanding all the clamorous demands of thine enemies [h].

10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not, that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

11 *Jesus* calmly *replied, Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above*, from the God of heaven, whose providence I acknowledge in all these events [i]: *therefore he who has delivered me to thee*, even the Jewish high-priest with his council, having far greater opportunities of knowing him and his law, *hath the greater* and more aggravated *sin*; yet thou thyself canst not but know that on the principles of natural equity an innocent person ought not to be given up to popular fury.

11 Jesus answered, Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

12 *And from this time Pilate* was so far satisfied of the injustice of the prosecution, and of the innocence of Jesus, that he *endeavoured* the more *earnestly to release him. But the Jews* still insisted on his passing sentence on him to be crucified; and apprehensive of the governor's design, that

12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews

h *Dost thou not know that I have power to crucify thee?* &c.] Even they who maintain that the Jews had a power of *executing capital sentences* in Christ's time, acknowledge that power to have been *under the control* of the *Roman governor*; and that it was in fact *so often controlled*, that at last the *Jewish sanhedrim* removed from the chamber in which alone they could regularly pass them, that they might not have the mortification of seeing continually how little their decisions availed, when the most notorious criminal, if he had but money, could buy a pardon from their common masters. So that *the dispute*, after all the noise it has made in the learned world, seems at last to terminate in this nicety, "whether the *consent* of the *Roman governor* were *expressly asked* before the Jews proceeded to an execution, or were *taken for granted* if the contrary did not appear?" Or, in other words, "Whether the efficacy of a sentence passed by the Jews were owing to the *express consent* or the *connivance* of the Romans?" The conduct of the Jews in this case seems to prove the former of these to have been the true state of the affair; and vindicates not only the substance of what Dr. *Lardner* has maintained, but the particular manner in which he expresses it. See *note* c on Mat. xxvii. 2, p. 375.

i *Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.*] Some have thought that the word ανωθεν, *from above*, refers to the situation of *the temple*, which stood much *higher* than the *prætorium*; and that it is as if Jesus had said, "I know that whatever thou dost against me is only in consequence of the sentence passed in yonder court held *above*; so that their guilt is greater than thine." But though this would very well account for the connection of the latter part of the *verse*, I cannot think it altogether just; for had providence permitted Pilate to seize Christ as one dangerous to Cæsar's dignity, he would have had as much *power* of putting him to death as he now had. It is therefore much more reasonable to suppose it refers to the permission of God's providence. No thought was more proper to the occasion; and I think the interpretation I have given to the *latter clause* in this view is natural, though not very common. But if any are not satisfied with it, they may consider whether διο τουτο may not be connected with the *beginning* of the *verse*, so that it might be translated, *Thou couldest have no power at all against me, unless it were given thee from above for this purpose.* (Compare *note* f on John vii. 21, sect. xcix. Vol. VI. p. 515.

k As

Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cesar.

that they effectually might put a stop to his intention of discharging him, they eagerly *cried out, saying, If thou let this man go* off with his life, *thou art not Cæsar's friend*, though thou bearest his commission, and representest his person; for *every one that makes himself a king* of Judea *speaks against Cæsar* our emperor, and in effect arraigns the legality of his government here. SECT. CLXXXVIII. John XIX. 12.

13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in a place that is called the pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

When Pilate therefore heard that speech, he was very much alarmed, as he well knew how suspicious a prince Tiberius was, and how many spies he kept on all his officers, that nothing might be done or permitted by them in any of the provinces, which could at all interfere with his authority [k]: and, that he might not then be charged with any want of zeal for Cæsar's interest, *he brought Jesus out* of the palace again, *and* once more *sate down on the tribunal*, which was then erected (as was said before, p. 377.) without the palace, *in a place called* in Greek, Lithostraton, or *the Pavement*, on account of a beautiful piece of Mosaic work with which the floor was adorned: *but in Hebrew* it was called *Gabbatha*, or the High-place, because it stood on an eminence, so that the judge, being seated there on his tribunal, might be heard and seen by a considerable number of people [l]. 13

14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your king!

And it was then *the preparation of the passover*, or the sixth day of the week, and consequently the day which fell before the paschal sabbath, which was observed with some peculiar solemnity (see John xix. 31, sect. cxcii.); *and* the morning was so far advanced, that it [*was*] drawing on apace *towards the sixth hour*, and was now about the third hour, or nine in the morning [m], which obliged them to dispatch, that they 14

[k] *As he well knew how suspicious a prince Tiberius was, &c.*] Every body that knows the character of Tiberius, especially as illustrated by Suetonius in his excellent *History*, will see how naturally Pilate might be apprehensive on this head.

[l] *In Hebrew, Gabbatha.*] There are various *etymologies* of this word. I think the most probable is that which derives it from גבה, *elevavit*, and so it intimates its being *raised on high*. It was, perhaps, a kind of *stage*, or *scaffold*, in the midst of a spacious *area* belonging to the palace, in which the governor might place himself on public, and especially on judicial, occasions. It plainly appears from the connection of the words that it was not in his house, but somewhere *without*, probably in some open place.

[m] *Was drawing on apace towards the sixth hour*, and was now about the third hour, *&c.*] Difficulties, which seem to me quite invincible, attend the *reading* which is generally received, [*It was about the sixth hour,*] whether we reckon it, according to the Roman method of computation, *six in the morning*, or, according to the Jewish computation, *twelve at noon*.

SECT. CLXXXVIII.

John XIX. 14.

they might have execution done, as usual, before noon. And Pilate, finding he must, after all, yield to the people, and consent to the death of Jesus, lest his former struggle should be misrepresented at Rome, was resolved to manage this incident so as to procure from the Jews a public acknowledgment of Cæsar's authority: *and* therefore, pointing to Jesus, as he now appeared in this mock pomp of royalty, *he says to the Jews*, who were present in vast numbers, *Behold your king*, if you think fit to own him,

15 as it is said many of you have done. *But they* again *cried out* with indignation and disdain, *Away with* [*him*] *away with* [*him*]; we are so far from owning him, that we desire thee to *crucify him*. *Pilate says to them*, What, *shall I crucify your king?* How strange, and how extravagant a demand is this! And *the chief priests answered*, in the name of all the people, *We have no king but* the emperor Tiberius *Cæsar*, whose royal authority we all of us acknowledge, and will always maintain.

15 But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cesar.

Mat. XXVII. 24

And Pilate, seeing that it signified nothing any longer to oppose the popular torrent, *but that they*

MAT. XXVII. 24. When Pilate saw that he

—The best *commentators* I know (and among the rest of late Dr. *Guyse*) think the whole difficulty of reconciling these words of John with Mark, who tells us (chap. xv. 25, sect. clxxxix.) that Christ was *crucified at the third hour*; and with Matthew and Luke, who exactly agree with him in fixing the time of that *darkness* which happened while Christ hung upon the cross (compare Mat. xxvii. 45; Luke xxiii. 44; and Mark xv. 33, sect. cxci.); is easily solved by understanding it, according to the Roman account, of *six in the morning*. But as John was a Jew, and elsewhere seems to use the Jewish account (John i. 39, iv. 6, 52), that very supposition is in general improbable. Or if, out of regard to the considerations which the learned, but here dubious and perplexed, *Seltnerus* has urged (see *Seltner. Hor. Pilat.* p. 14, *& seq.*) we were to grant it in general a supposable case, very strong objections will lie against supposing it here. For though we should, with many *critics*, take it for granted that the *passover* here fell late in April (which was the latest it could fall), the sun would not rise at Jerusalem till near *five o'clock*, and one cannot suppose the *sanhedrim* assembled till about *break of day*. How then is it possible that their *condemnation* of Christ, his *arraignment* and *examination*, first before Pilate, then before Herod, together with Pilate's repeated *examinations* of him, and *conferences* with the Jews about him, as also the *change of dress, scourging, crowning with thorns*, &c. should be dispatched by *six?* The very *contents* of the *preceding sections* seem to demonstrate the contrary.—On the other hand, it could not now be *twelve at noon*, since Mark assures us to the contrary, and his account is confirmed both by Matthew and Luke. (See the places just now quoted, and *noted* on Mark xv. 25, sect. clxxxix.)—I cannot therefore but conclude with *Columelus (Observ.* p. 77), Beza, and Erasmus, that instead of *the sixth* we should read *the third hour*, that is, *nine in the morning*. For this we have the authority of the *Cambridge manuscript*, and of *Peter of Alexandria*, who expressly asserts it was τριτην, *the third*, in the *original copy*, which he says continued till his time; and though, as Dr. *Mill* abundantly shews in his *Annotation* on this place, all the best *manuscripts* and ancient *versions* are on the other side, I am obliged here to follow the superior authority of common sense; however, in submission to the greatest number of *copies*, I have still retained the *common reading* in the *version*, and have only given what I apprehend to be the *true reading* in the *paraphrase*.—Some other unsatisfactory *hypotheses* will be touched on in the *note* last referred to. See a large and accurate view of them in *Wolf. Cur. Phil.* Vol. I. page 969—976.

He

he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye *to it*.

they rather grew more *tumultuous* by the delay, was determined however to do all he could to make his own conscience easy in complying with this their unjust request; and therefore *he took water, and washed his hands in the presence of the multitude*[n], *saying*, I call heaven and earth to witness that *I am innocent of the blood of this righteous* [*man*]; *look you* [*to*] the consequences of shedding [*it*], and remember you are answerable for them, whatever they may prove.

SECT. CLXXVIII

Mat. XXVII. 24

25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children.

And all the people answered, saying, We will venture those consequences, *may his blood*, if innocent, *be on us, and on our children!* and may the curse of shedding it lie upon us throughout all generations[o]!

25

LUKE XXIII. 24. And Pilate [willing to content the people] gave

And when they had said this, *Pilate*, who now was something easier in his own mind, and was *desirous to satisfy the people*[p], since he perceived it

Luke XXIII. 24

n *He took water, and washed his hands*, &c.] It is well known that the Jews in some cases were appointed to *wash their hands* as a solemn token that they were not themselves concerned in the *murder* committed by some unknown person (see Deut. xxi. 6—9): but, as this was also *a rite* that was frequently used by the Gentiles in token of *innocence*, it is more probable that Pilate, who was a Gentile, did it in conformity to them. See *Grotius in loc.* and *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 122, 123.

o *May his blood be on us, and on our children!*] As this terrible *imprecation* was dreadfully answered in the ruin so quickly brought on the Jewish nation, and the calamities which have since pursued that wretched people, in almost all ages and countries; so it was peculiarly illustrated in the severity with which Titus, merciful as he naturally was, treated the Jews whom he took during the siege of Jerusalem; of whom *Josephus* himself writes (*Bell. Jud.* lib. v. cap. 11 (al. vi. 12), § 1), that *μαστιγωσαι αικισαντες, having been scourged and tortured in a very terrible manner, they were crucified*, in the view, and near the walls of this city; perhaps, among other places, on *mount Calvary*: and it is very probable this might be the fate of some of those very persons who now joined in *this cry*, as it undoubtedly was of many of their *children*. For Josephus, who was an eye-witness, expressly declares, "that the number of those thus *crucified* was so great, that there was not room for the *crosses* to stand by each other; and that at last they had not *wood enough* to make *crosses* of." A passage which, *especially* when compared with the *verse* before us, impresses and astonishes me beyond any other which I recollect in the whole story. If this were not the very *finger of God*, pointing out their crime in *crucifying his Son*, it is hard to say what could deserve to be called so.—*Elsner* has abundantly shewn, that among the Greeks, the persons on whose testimony others were put to death, used, by a very solemn *execration*, to devote themselves to the Divine vengeance, if the person so condemned were not really guilty. *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 123—125.)—We are told by *Grotius* (*de Jure Bell. & Pac.* lib. iii. cap. 4. § 9, No. 2) that Titus commanded the *women* and *children* of the Jews to be exposed in theatres, and there to be devoured by wild beasts: a fact which I should have thought it extremely proper to mention here, if any authority were introduced to support it. But as I cannot meet with any such account in Josephus, I am ready to ascribe what Grotius says of it to a slip of memory in that great *critic*; especially considering how improbable it was that so humane a prince as Titus should be guilty of such almost unexampled cruelty. On the contrary, in the only passage I recollect, where Josephus speaks of exposing the Jewish captives to wild beasts, (*Joseph. Bell. Jud.* lib. vi. cap. 9. [al. viii. 16], § 2), it is expressly said that Titus sold all who were under seventeen years old.

p *Desirous to satisfy the people*: το ικανον ποιησαι.] As his former administration had given them a great deal of disgust, he might very probably think it absolutely necessary thus to appease them: yet they afterwards followed him with their accusations to his ruin; and thus, by the righteous judg-

SECT. CLXXXVIII. it could be done no other way, *pronounced sentence, that what they demanded should be done,* and that Jesus should be put to death.

Luke XXIII. 25 *And*, in pursuance of that sentence, *he released to them Barabbas, who* (as was said before) *was thrown into prison for sedition and murder*; but *whom*, aggravated as his crimes were, *they had* importunately *desired* in preference to Christ: *and having* (as we related above, John xix. 1, p. 390) already *scourged Jesus*, he did not renew that torture[q]; however, *he delivered him to their will to be crucified*, with such circumstances as they thought proper; and they soon shewed that their tender mercies were cruel.

gave sentence that should be as they required. [MARK XV. 15.—]

25 And he released to them [Barabbas,] that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired: [and when he had scourged Jesus,] he delivered him to their will [to be crucified.] [MAT. XXVII. 26. MARK XV.—JOHN XIX. 16.—]

Mat. XXVII. 31 *And* when the Jewish mob had thus prevailed, *after they had mocked* and insulted *him* for a while, just as the Roman soldiers had before done in the prætorium, deriding his pretences to a kingdom, and abusing him like the vilest slave, *they took the purple robe off from him*[r], *and having dressed him* again *in his own garments*, they *led him away to be crucified*, in the manner which we shall presently relate.

MAT. XXVII. 31. And after that they had mocked him, they took the [purple] robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. [MARK XV. 20.]

IMPROVEMENT.

John xix. 13. LET us now, by a lively act of faith, bring forth the blessed *Jesus* to our imagination, as *Pilate brought him forth* to the people. Let us with affectionate sympathy survey the indignities Ver. 1. which were offered him, when he *gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; and hid not his face from shame and spitting*; (Isa. l. 6.) *Behold the man*, wearing his *purple*

ment of God, he lost all the advantage which he hoped to gain by this base compliance, as Felix did when he afterwards injured Paul on the same unworthy principles. Acts xxiv. 27.

q *Having* already *scourged Jesus*: φραγελλωσας.] Many *critics*, and among the rest *Elsner* (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 125), have shewn that *scourging* used to *precede crucifixion*; but as John, who is most exact in his account of this part of the story, mentions his *having been scourged* before, and says nothing of the repetition of it (which, considering Pilate's conviction of his innocence, he would probably spare), I choose to interpret the word in this manner, which the *original* will very well bear.

r *They took the purple robe off from him.*] It is observable, as we have seen above, p. 390. that Matthew (chap. xxvii. 28) mentions *a scarlet robe*, χλαμυδα, and Mark (chap. xv. 17, as well as here) *a purple garment*, την πορφυραν. I take not upon me to determine whether either of these words be used for the other, waving, as in some other cases, the most exact signification; or whether there were *two garments* used, *a purple vest*, and over that *a scarlet robe*. However, it is probable, whatever they were, Pilate, or any of his chief officers, would not cover his bleeding body with any thing better than an *old*, and perhaps *tattered habit*, which answered their contemptuous purpose much better than the best which the *governor's wardrobe* could have afforded.

purple robe and *thorny crown*, and bearing *the reed* which smote him *in his right hand* for a sceptre! *Behold*, not merely *the man*, but *the Son of God*, thus vilely degraded, thus infamously abused! Shall *we*, as it were, increase his sufferings, and, while we condemn the fury and cruelty of the *Jews*, shall we *crucify him to ourselves afresh, and put him to an open shame?* (Heb. vi. 6.) Or shall we overlook him with slight and contempt, and *hide our faces from him*, who for our sake thus exposed his own? (Isa. liii. 3.) SECT. CLXXXVIII. Mat. XXVII. 29 John XIX. 5

Let the caution even of this *heathen judge*, who *feared*, when he *heard* he so much as pretended to be *the Son of God*, engage us to reverence him, especially considering in how *powerful* a manner he has since been *declared to be so;* (Rom. i. 4.) Let us in this sense *have nothing to do with* the blood of *this just Person.*—Let *his example* teach us patiently to submit to those sufferings which God shall appoint for us, remembering that no enemies, and no calamities we meet with, could *have any power against us, except it were given* them *from above.* 7, 8 Mat. XXVII. 19 John XIX. 11

How wisely was it ordered by Divine Providence that *Pilate* should be obliged thus to *acquit Christ*, even while he *condemned him;* and to speak of him as a *righteous person*, in the same breath with which he doomed him to the *death* of the most flagitious *malefactor!* And how lamentably does the power of *worldly interest* over *conscience* appear, when, after all the convictions of his own mind, as well as the admonitions of *his wife*, he yet *gave him up* to popular fury. O *Pilate*, how gloriously hadst thou fallen in the defence of the *Son of God!* and how justly did God afterwards leave thee to perish by the resentment of that people whom thou wast now so studious to oblige[s]! Mat. XXVII. 24, 26 Luke XXIII. 24, 25

Who can without trembling read that dreadful imprecation, *May his blood be on us, and on our children!* Words which, even to this day, have their remarkable and terrible accomplishment in that *curse*, which has pursued the *Jews* through *seventeen hundred* years. *Lord*, may it at length be averted, and even turned into *a blessing!* May they *look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn*, till all the obstinacy of their hearts be subdued: till they bow Mat. XXVII. 25

[s] Leave thee to perish, &c.] *Josephus (Antiq.* lib. xviii. cap. 4 [al. 5], § 1, 2) expressly assures us that Pilate, having slain a considerable number of seditious Samaritans, was deposed from his government by Vitellius, and sent to Tiberius at Rome, who died before he arrived there. And *Eusebius* tells us *(Hist. Eccles.* lib. ii. cap. 7), that quickly after having, as others say, been banished to Vienne in Gaul) he laid violent hands upon himself, falling on his own sword. Agrippa, who was an eye-witness to many of his enormities, speaks of him in his *oration* to Caius Cæsar as one who *had been* a man of a most infamous character *(Philo. Jud. in Leg.* p. 1034); and by that manner of speaking, as Valesius well observes, it is plainly intimated he was then dead. Probably the accusations of other Jews following him, had before that proved his destruction.

[a] *They*

SECT. CLXXXVIII. bow down in glad submission to that *King* whom God has *set on his holy hill*, and thus are brought themselves to *reign with him* in everlasting honour and joy!

SECT. CLXXXIX.

Jesus, being delivered up by Pilate to the rage of the people, bears his cross to Calvary, and is there nailed to it. Mat. XXVII. 32—34, 38. Mark XV. 21—23, 25, 27, 28. Luke XXIII. 26—34.—John XIX. 16—18.

JOHN XIX.—16.

SECT. CLXXXIX. NOW after Pilate had passed sentence upon Jesus, to satisfy the restless clamour of the Jews, and had delivered him to the soldiers to John XIX. 16 be crucified, his prosecutors, having gained their point, hastened his execution; *and* having insulted and abused him (as was said before), *they took Jesus, and led him away* to that terrible punishment[a].

JOHN XIX.—16. AND they took Jesus, and led him away.

Luke XXIII. 32 *And*, to expose him to the greater ignominy and reproach, and to prejudice the people more strongly against him, *there were also two other* [*men, who were*] condemned to die upon the cross for a robbery, and were well known to be great *malefactors*, that were *led* out of Jerusalem *with him, to be executed* at the same time; that in such company he might be thought to suffer for the worst of crimes.

LUKE XXIII. 32. And there were also two other malefactors led with him, to be put to death.

John XIX. 17 *And* Jesus, thus attended as a criminal, was led through the city, *carrying* a heavy part of *his cross* on his shoulders, according to the custom of those who were to be crucified: and in this manner *he went out* of the city *to a place* which lay on the western side of Jerusalem, but a little without the boundaries of it[b], *which was*

JOHN XIX. 17. And he bearing his cross, went forth into a place called *the place* of a scull,

a *They took Jesus and led him away.*] It is evident *this text* is *parallel* to Mat. xxvii. —31, and Mark xv.—20. But I have here, as in some other instances of two or more *parallel* passages, put *one* at the conclusion of a former *section*, and the other at the beginning of the next, for a better connection.—I may also add that *this* seems to me the exact place of Matt. xxvii. 3—10, in which the *evangelist* relates the tragical end of Judas; but I hope I shall be indulged in *transposing* it, partly that I may preserve a better proportion in the length of the *sections*, and chiefly that I may not interrupt the important story of *Christ's passion*: and I more easily allow myself to do it, because probably the very same consideration engaged Matthew a little to anticipate it. Let it only here be observed, that the *death* of this *traitor* seems to have happened *before* that of *his Master*: so speedily did the Divine vengeance pursue his aggravated crime.

b *Carrying a heavy part of his cross, went out* of the city, &c.] Dr. *Lardner* has abundantly proved, from many *quotations*, that it was customary not only for the Jews (Numb. xv. 35. 1 Kings xxi. 13.

Acts

scull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha.

was called in the Hebrew language *Golgotha, [or] the place of a scull;* because the bodies of many criminals, having been executed on that little eminence, were buried there. SECT. CLXXXIX. John XIX. 17.

LUKE XXIII. 26. And as they led him away, [they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name,] [MARK, the father of Alexander and Rufus, who passed by, coming out of the country, *and*] they laid hold on *him;* [*and* him they compelled to bear his cross]: and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear *it* after Jesus. [MAT. XXVII. 32. MARK XV. 21.]

And as they led him on, Jesus was now so faint with the loss of blood, so very sore with the lashes and bruises he had received, and so fatigued with the load of such a large piece of timber, that he was not able to proceed so fast as they desired, especially considering how little time they had before them to finish their work. And as he was advancing slowly to the place of execution, *they met* on the road a poor African, who was *a native of Cyrene, named Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus,* who afterwards became Christians, and were of some note in the church: this Simon at that time was *passing by, as he came out of the country* to Jerusalem; [*and*] *they* immediately *laid hold on* [*him*] as one fit for their purpose, finding him a strong man, and it may be suspecting that he was a favourer of Jesus; [*and*] pretending that the authority of the Roman governor impowered them to press any they met for this service, they *compelled him to carry* at least one end of *his cross, and* accordingly *on him they laid the cross, that he might carry it after Jesus.* Luke XXIII. 26

27 And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

And a great multitude of people crowded after him to see the crucifixion; *and* particularly a considerable number *of women,* who had attended his ministry with great delight, *followed him* on this sad occasion; *who* were so tenderly affected with the moving sight, that they not only pitied him in their hearts, but *also* vented their concern in tears, and *bewailed and lamented him* in a very affectionate manner. 27

28 But Jesus turning unto them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

But Jesus turning to them, said, Alas, ye *daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me,* who am willing to submit to all the sufferings appointed for me, as what I know will issue in the salvation of my people, and in my exaltation to the highest glory; *but* rather *weep for yourselves, and for your children,* in consideration of the dreadful judgments 28

Acts vii. 58), but also for the Sicilians, Ephesians, and Romans, to execute their malefactors *without the gates* of their cities. (See his *Credibility,* part i. Vol. I. p. 354, 355.)—What *our Lord carried,* was not the *whole cross,* but only that *transverse piece of wood* to which his arms were afterwards fastened; and which was called *antennæ,* or *furca,* going cross the *stipes,* or *upright beam,* which was fixed in the earth. This the *criminal* used to *carry,* and therefore was called *furcifer.* See *Bishop Pearson on the Creed,* p. 203, 204.

SECT. CLXXXIX. judgments that these crimes will quickly bring upon this wretched people, whose calamities will be of much longer duration than mine.

Luke XXIII. *For*, let it be remembered by you as my dying
29 words, *behold the days are* surely and quickly *coming*, and some of you may live to see them, *in which* the innocent blood which this people have imprecated upon themselves shall come down upon their heads in so terrible a manner, that *they shall* have reason to *say*, *Happy* [*are*] *the barren* women, *and the wombs which never bare* children, *and the breasts that never suckled* them: for as relations are multiplied, sorrows shall be multiplied with them, and parents shall see their children subject to all the miseries which famine, and pestilence, and sword, and
30 captivity can bring upon them. *Then shall they* who are now triumphing in my death be trembling with horror, in expectation of their own; and, considering present calamities as the forerunners of future, yet more intolerable miseries shall *begin*, in despair of the Divine mercy, *to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us*, from the more dreadful pressure of
31 God's wrath, which is kindled against us. *For if they do these things in the green wood, what shall be done in the dry?* If such agonies as these fall upon me, who am not only an innocent person, but God's own Son, when I put myself in the stead of sinners, what will become of those wretches who can feel none of my supports and consolations, and whose personal guilt makes them as proper fuel for the Divine vengeance, as dry wood is to the consuming fire?

29 For behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

Mat. XXVII. At length they arrived at the place of execu-
33 tion: *and when they were come* thither, even *to the place* which (we before observed) was *called* in Hebrew *Golgotha, that is to say, the place of a scull*, a little without the city [*on*] mount *Calvary* (which was the usual place for executing criminals, and seemed a proper spot of ground for the purpose, as on account of its eminence the malefactors crucified there might be seen at a considerable distance, and by a great number
34 of spectators); *They* proceeded to the fatal purpose for which they came: and as it was customary to give to dying criminals a potion of strong wine mingled with spices, to cheer their spirits, and render them less sensible of their sufferings, the soldiers who attended him *gave him*

MAT. XXVII. 33. And when they were come to [the] place called Golgotha, that is to say, [the] place of a scull [LUKE, *or* Calvary], [MARK XV. 22. LUKE XXIII. 33.]

34 They gave him vinegar to drink, mingled

gled with gall; and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink.

him nothing better *to drink* than *vinegar mingled with gall*, by that odious mixture farther expressing their cruelty and contempt: *and when he had tasted* [*of it*,] that he might submit to every distasteful circumstance which providence allotted to him, *he would not drink* any large draught of it, as knowing it would answer no valuable end to do it. *And*, as some of his friends had on that occasion provided a cordial cup, *they gave him* [*also*] a draught of generous *wine to drink*, *mingled with myrrh* and other spices, which they thought proper on that sad occasion;[c] *but he did not receive* [*it*,] determining to bear the full force of his pains, unallayed by any such preparation, and to maintain his thoughts in the most vigorous exercise.

SECT. clxxxix.

Mat. XXVII. 34

Mark XV. 23.

MARK XV. 23. And they [*also*] gave him to drink, wine mingled with myrrh: but he received *it* not.

25 And it was the third hour, and [there] they crucified him:—[LUKE XXIII.—33.—JOHN XIX. 18.—]

And it was now *the third hour* of the day, or nine o'clock in the morning[d], when they thus brought him to mount Calvary; *and there*, when all things were made ready, *they* nailed his hands and his feet to the cross, and *crucified him.*

25

27 And with him they crucify [LUKE, the malefactors, *or*] two thieves, the one on his right-hand, and the other on his left, [JOHN, and Jesus in the midst.] [MAT.

And they also *crucified with him the two malefactors* [*or*] *robbers*, that were mentioned before, *the one on his right-hand, and the other on the left; and* they placed *Jesus in the midst*, as a mark of the greatest indignity, to prejudice the multitude the more against him, and to induce them to regard him as the most infamous criminal

27

[c] *They gave him* also *wine to drink, mingled with myrrh.*] Some think that this was *sour wine*, called *vinegar* by Matthew; but I apprehend the reasons which Dr. *Edwards* has produced (*Exercit.* part ii. No. 2. p. 178—188.) sufficiently prove that this *wine mingled with myrrh* was a different mixture from the *vinegar and gall*, which he *received* so far as to *taste it*. Probably those *pious women*, some of them (as the story shews) persons in plentiful circumstances, whose zeal engaged them to follow him to Calvary, and afterwards so liberally to prepare *unguents* and *aromatic drugs* for his *embalming*, had provided on this sad occasion some *rich wine* tempered with choice *spices*, which with perfect propriety he *refused to taste*, lest malice should insinuate he intended thereby to render himself insensible of the terrors of death.

[d] *It was* now *the third hour* of the day, or nine o'clock in the morning.] I can by no means agree with *Vossius*, and some other *critics*, to read it here *the sixth hour*; for there ought to be very cogent reasons for departing from the authority of all the best *copies* and ancient *versions*: (see Dr. *Mill in loc.*) Nor can I think, with Heinsius, that these words in Mark refer not to the *hour of the day* in which Christ was crucified, but to the length of *time* he had been upon the *cross* when his *garments were divided*, which Mark had spoken of just before in ver. 24. For as Mark mentions the *sixth* and the *ninth hour* (ver. 33.) this interpretation would oblige us to conclude, either that Mark used *two* very different ways of computation within the compass of a *few verses*, or else that Christ did not expire till he had been *nine hours* on the cross. And as these objections equally lie against *Godwyn's* Hypothesis, (*Moses and Aaron* book iii. chap. i.) that we are here to distinguish between the *four larger* and *twelve smaller hours* into which the day was divided, I do not think it necessary more particularly to consider it, though the learned *Gerhardus* in his *Harmony* prefers it to all others.—Compare *note* m on John xix. 14. sect. clxxxviii. p. 395.

[e] *And*

SECT. CLXXXIX. criminal of the three. *And* thus *the scripture was* remarkably *fulfilled*, (Isa. liii. 12.) in *which* the prophet Isaiah, speaking with an amazing plainness of the sufferings of the Messiah, *saith*, "*And he was numbered with the transgressors* [e]."

Mark XV. 28.

[MAT. XXVII. 38. JOHN XIX.—18.] 28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

Luke XXIII. 34. *And Jesus* made no manner of resistance to this cruel violence, nor did he revile them even when they were distorting his limbs as on a rack, and nailing his hands and his feet on the full stretch to the accursed tree; but, in the midst of his anguish, he breathed out his soul in a compassionate prayer for his murderers; and pleading the only excuse which the most extensive charity could suggest, he *said*, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing* [f]: The Roman soldiers, who were the immediate instruments of his death, having indeed but little knowledge of him; and the Jews, who were the authors of it, through their obstinate prejudices not apprehending who he was: "for if they had known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (1 Cor. ii. 8.)

LUKE XXIII. 34.—Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

IMPROVEMENT.

HERE let us pause a while, and make a few serious reflections on this amazing story, which the *evangelists* relate with so much simplicity. Behold *the Son of God bearing his cross*, fainting under the load of it, and at length extended upon it, and *nailed* to it. *Him they took, and with wicked hands crucified and slew him*, (Acts ii. 23.) Blessed *Jesus*, was it *for this* that thou didst honour our nature by a union to thine own, and come from thy throne of glory to visit these abodes of misery and guilt! Was it *for this* that so many gracious discourses were delivered, and so many works of love and power performed! *for this*, that thou mightest be treated as the *worst of criminals*, and suspended on a *cross* in the air, as if unworthy of a place on earth even to die upon!

John xix. 17, 18

Mark xv. 27, 28

e *And he was numbered with the transgressors.*] I choose, in *quotations* from the *Old Testament*, to keep as close to our *English version* of the passage quoted as the Greek will allow me, that the memory of the hearer may assist him in distinguishing the *text*; else I should have rendered ανομων, *criminals*, as the word פשעים, which Isaiah uses, seems also to signify. The least offence is a *transgression* of the law of God, or a stepping over the boundaries he has prescribed but this imports much more.

f *Father, forgive them,* &c.] This is one of the most striking passages in the world. While they are actually nailing him to the cross, he seems to feel the injury these poor creatures did to their own souls, more than the wounds they gave him; and as it were to forget his own anguish, in a concern for their salvation. I render τι ποιουσι, *what they are doing*, as thinking that *version* most expressive of the present circumstance; and indeed it is the exact import of what *grammarians* call the *present tense*.

upon! Amazing and lamentable sight! Justly, *O sun*, mightest thou blush to see it: justly, *O earth*, mightest thou tremble to support it! SECT. CLXXXIX.

Lord, like these pious *women*, who had the zeal and fortitude to *attend thee*, when thine own *apostles forsook thee and fled*, we would *follow thee weeping*: yet *not for thee, but for ourselves*: that our guilt had brought us under a *condemnation*, from which we could be *redeemed* by nothing less than the *precious blood of the Son of God*: that *Lamb without blemish and without spot*, (1 Pet. i. 19.)—We should *behold* herein *the goodness and the severity of God*, (Rom. xi. 22.) for while the *riches of his goodness* are displayed in his *providing a ransom* for the redemption of lost sinners, an awful proof is given of the *severity of his justice*, in his *not sparing his own Son*, nor exempting him from the sorrows and sufferings due to sin, when he came to put himself in the stead of sinners: and may we not in such a view *tremble for fear of him, and be afraid of his judgments?* (Psal. cxix. 120.) Who can support the weight of his *indignation*, especially when it shall come aggravated by the abuse of so much *love! If these things be done in the green wood, what shall be done in the dry?* And if such sufferings be inflicted, where there was not any *personal guilt* to kindle the flame, on one who only answered for the sins of others; what then will be the end of those who, *by their own iniquities*, are become as *fuel* prepared for the fire, and are as *vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?* Luke xxiii. 27, 28 — 31

How shocking is it to behold the vile *indignities* that were put upon a suffering *Jesus*, and to reflect upon the cruel treatment that he met with from his insulting enemies! Yet have not *we* been *verily guilty* concerning this matter? (Gen. xlii. 21.) Are we not chargeable with *despising Christ?* and have we *not crucified the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame?* (Heb. vi. 6.) O may that *apology* be heard in our favour! *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!* For surely sinners *do not know what they do*, when they *pierce Christ* by their sins, and *turn away their faces from him*.—But under all his sufferings, how amazing was his *meekness!* and how compassionate the *concern* which he expressed for his most cruel persecutors? May we learn *patience*, and *love to our enemies*, from so bright an example of it! May we, like him, *bless them that curse us, and pray for them that despitefully use us, and persecute us!* (Mat. v. 44.) Instead of being ingenious to aggravate their faults, and to paint them in the most shocking colours, let us rather seek for the best *excuses*, which even the worst of causes will fairly bear; influenced by that *charity* which unconstrained *believes no evil, and hopeth all things* even against hope. (1 Cor. xiii. 5, 7. Ver. 33 — 34

SECT. CLXXXIX. Gracious *Saviour!* thy dying *prayer*, and thy dying *blood*, were not *like water spilt upon the ground:* they *came up in remembrance before God*, when thy *gospel* began to be *preached at Jerusalem:* and *multitudes*, who were now *consenting to thy death, gladly received thy word, and were baptized*, (Acts ii. 41.) and they are now *in glory*, celebrating that *grace* which has taken out the *scarlet* and *crimson dye* of their sins, and turned that *blood* which they so impiously shed into the balm of their wounds, and the life of their souls.

SECT. CXC.

Christ's garments are divided by lot; and while he is himself insulted on the cross, he shews his mercy to the penitent thief. Mat. XXVII. 35—37, 39—44. Mark XV. 24, 26, 29—32. Luke XXIII. 34—43. John XIX. 19—24.

JOHN XIX. 23.

SECT. CXC. *THE soldiers therefore, when they had* thus *crucified Jesus, took his garments*, which according to custom they had stripped off, that John XXI. 23. the shame of suffering naked might be added to all the agony of the cross; *and*, as it was usual for the executioners to have the garments of the criminal whom they put to death, they *made four parts* of his clothes, assigning *to each soldier* of the quaternion employed on that occasion *a part*, and *casting lots upon them which* of the four *each man should take: and* they took *also the vest*, or inner-garment; *now the vest* had this curious circumstance attending it, that it *was without* any *seam* at all, being *woven from the top throughout* in one whole piece [a]. And as this was con-
24 sidered by them as more valuable than ordinary, *they said therefore one to another, Let us not* spoil this coat, as we must do if we go about to *tear it* into four parts, *but let us cast lots for it, whose* the whole of *it shall be:* and accordingly they did so, *that the scripture spoken by the prophet* David in the person of the Messiah *might* thus *be* literally *fulfilled, which saith*, (Psalm xxii. 18.) *They divided my garments among them, and cast lots for my vesture* [b]. *These*

JOHN XIX. 23. THEN the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; [MARK casting lots upon them, what every man should take;] and also *his* coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. [MAT. XXVII. 35.—MARK XV. 24. LUKE XXIII.—34.]

24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rent it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture [spoken by the prophet] might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore

[a] *Woven from the top throughout* in one whole piece.] Perhaps this curious garment might be the work and present of some of the *pious women* who attended him, and *ministered to him of their substance*, (Luke viii. 3.) The hint here given of its make has set some mechanical heads to work to contrive *a frame* for *weaving* such a *vest*; and a good *cut* of it may be seen in *Calmet's Dictionary*, on the word *vestments*, Vol. III. p. 119.

[b] *They divided my garments among them, &c.*]

therefore the soldiers did. [MAT. XXVII. 35.]

These things therefore the soldiers did, though with the utmost freedom as to themselves, yet by the secret disposal of Providence, which, by an undiscerned influence on their minds, led them to act in a remarkable correspondence to the Divine oracle. *And,* having done thus, *they sat down* near the cross, *and guarded him,* and the other two who were crucified with him, that none might come *there* to rescue them before they were quite dead [c].

SECT. CXC.

John XIX. 24

MAT. XXVII. 36. And sitting down, they watched him there:

Mat. XXVII. 36

37 And set up over his head [the superscription of] his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS [JOHN, OF NAZARETH,] THE KING OF THE JEWS. [MARK XV. 26. LUKE XXIII. 38. JOHN XIX.—19.]

JOHN XIX. 19.—And Pilate wrote [the] title, and put it on the cross.

And, as the usual method was in cases of crucifixion, *they put* upon the cross *over his head a superscription* in capital letters [d], containing the substance *of his* pretended *crime, written* in these remarkable words, *THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. And* indeed it was *Pilate* who *wrote* [*this*] *title, and* ordered them to *put it on the cross;* which, howsoever it was designed as a reproach to Jesus, was in effect a declaration of his real character; and by the secret providence of God was over-ruled in a remarkable and public manner to proclaim the kingdom of Christ, while it was only meant to expose and ridicule his title to it. *Many of the Jews therefore* that came up to the feast of the passover, *read this inscription; because the place where Jesus was crucified was near to the city,* and lay but just without the gates: *and* that the inscription might be generally understood, *it was* expressed by Pilate's order in three languages, and *written* both *in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin letters,* so that it might easily be read by Jews, Romans, and most other foreigners [e].

37

John XIX. 19

20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in [letters of] Hebrew, [and] Greek, [and] Latin. [LUKE XXIII. —38.]

20

Now

&c.] We are no where told that David's goods were thus divided; and there are several other passages in the xxii. Psalm, particularly that in which mention is made of *piercing his hands and his feet,* to which no circumstance of David's personal sufferings seems to have borne any resemblance. It therefore seems to me exceeding probable that in *this scripture,* and some others the mind of the *prophet* was thrown into a preternatural ecstacy, in which on some secret intimation given to him that he therein personated the *Messiah,* he wrote expressly what the *Spirit* dictated, without any particular regard to himself; so that David might, for any thing I can find, with equal propriety have written such a psalm, if his whole life had been as prosperous and peaceable as the reign of Solomon his son. (Compare 1 Pet. i. 10—12.)

[c] That none might come to rescue them, &c.] This was the more necessary in this kind of execution, because the wounds given in *crucifixion* were not generally mortal. The person crucified died partly by the *loss of blood,* if any large vessel was pierced by the *nails,* when nails (as here) were used; but chiefly by the violent *distortion of the limbs,* which were stretched forth as on a *rack;* a circumstance which must, no doubt, occasion exquisite anguish.

[d] *They put over his head a superscription.*] This Bishop *Pearson* (on the *Creed,* p. 205.) and Dr. *Lardner, (Credibility,* part i. book i. chap. 7, § 10, Vol. I. p. 347.) have abundantly proved to be *usual* in cases of any extraordinary punishment.

[e] *In Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin letters.*] It was written in Latin, for the majesty

SECT. CXC.

Now when this inscription was drawn up, *the chief priests of the Jews* were very much offended at the form in which it was expressed; and
John XIX. 21 *therefore* objected against it, and *said to Pilate, Do not write, The king of the Jews;* for we entirely disown him under that character, as thou well knowest; *but* rather write, *that he*
22 *said, I am the king of the Jews.* But *Pilate*, who was very much displeased at the importunity by which, contrary to his inclination and judgment, they had extorted from him the sentence of death he had passed upon Jesus, *answered* with some warmth, *What I have written, I have written*, and, whoever may object against it, I am determined it shall stand as it is.

Mat. XXVII. 39 When therefore they were unable to procure any alteration, they were determined publicly to turn it into a jest; and therefore some of them went in person to Calvary to insult and scoff at Jesus even in his last moments. *And the* common *people*, that *stood beholding* the execution, reviled him; *and* even *they that passed by* on the road *blasphemed him, shaking their heads* at him,
40 in an upbraiding scornful manner; *And saying, Ah thou* vain boaster, *that wouldest destroy the temple, and build it* again *in three days!* let us now see if thou canst *save thyself; and if thou art* indeed *the Son of God*, give us a proof of thy power now, and *come down from the cross;* for in thy present circumstances that will be the most proper miracle thou canst work in confir-
41 mation of thy pretended mission. *And in like manner also the chief priests*, together *with the scribes and elders, and the rulers also* themselves, the malice of whose hearts had made them to forget the dignity of their characters, and to attend among the mob upon this base and barbarous occasion, joined *with them* in their scoffs, and with a scornful sneer *derided him;* [*and*]
42 *mocking, said one to another*, Ay, this is *he* that *saved others*, and undertook to give them perfect deliverance and everlasting happiness; [*but*] now you see *he cannot save himself* from the most infamous execution: *if he be* really *the* true

21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The king of the Jews; but that he said, I am king of the Jews.

22 Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written.

MAT. XXVII. 39. And [LUKE, the people stood beholding: and] they that passed by, reviled him, wagging their heads,—[MARK XV. 29.—LUKE XXIII. 35.—]

40 And saying, [Ah] thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself; [and] if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. [MARK XV.—29, 30.]

41 Likewise also the chief priests, [LUKE, and the rulers also with them derided *him, and*] [mocking, said among themselves,] with the scribes and elders, [MARK XV. 31.—LUKE XXIII.—35.]

42 He saved others, himself he cannot save: if he be [LUKE, Christ, the chosen of God,] the

jesty of the Roman empire; in Greek, for the information of the vast numbers of Hellenists who made use of that language, as indeed most provinces of the Roman empire did (see *Brerewood's Inquiries*, chap. i—iv.); and in Hebrew, as it was the *vulgar language* of the place.—Thus the *inscription* set up in the *temple*, to prohibit *strangers* from coming within those sacred limits, was written in all these *three languages*. See *Joseph. Bell. Jud.* lib. vi. cap. 2 [al. vii. 4.] § 4.

f *He*

the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, [LUKE, *and* save himself,] [that we may see,] and we will believe him.—[MARK XV.—31, 32. LUKE XXIII.—35.]

43 He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

LUKE XXIII. 36. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

37 And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

39 And one of the malefactors [also] which were hanged, [or crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth, *and*] railed on him, saying, If thou be

SECT. CXC.

true *Messiah, the Elect of God*, and in consequence of that Divine choice be *the king of Israel*, as he has so often pretended, *let him now come down from the cross*, [*and*] *save himself* from death, *that we may see* a demonstration of his saving power, *and we will* then *believe him*[f]. Nay, they were at once so profane and stupid as to borrow on this occasion the words foretold by David (Psal. xxii. 8.) and to say, "*He trusted in God*, and boasted of his interest in him; *let him deliver him now, if he will have him*, or if he delighteth in him;" *for he* has often *said, I am the Son of God*: the priests themselves not observing that this was the very language which the murderers of the Messiah are there described as using.

Mat. XXVII. 42, 43

And the soldiers also, who kept guard at that time, joined with the rest of the spectators, and *mocked him; coming to him, and offering him vinegar* to drink in the midst of his agonies; (compare John xix. 29, p. 416.) *And saying*, as the rulers and people had done, *If thou art* really, as thou hast frequently pretended, *the King of the Jews*[g], before thou undertakest to deliver them, *save thyself* from our power, and so begin to assert thy claim to a supreme authority.

Luke XXIII. 36, 37

And one of the malefactors also[h], *who hung on the cross with him*, regardless of that innocence and dignity which Jesus manifested under all his sufferings, and unaffected with a sense of his own aggravated guilt, *upbraided him with the same*

39

[f] *He saved others*, &c.] Nothing could be baser than thus to upbraid him with this *saving power*, which was not a vain pretence, but had produced so many noble and stupendous effects. And it was equally unreasonable to put the credit of his mission on his *coming down from the cross*: a vigorous spring might possibly have forced the nails from the hands and feet of a crucified person, so that he might have leaped from the cross. What Christ had so lately done before their eyes, and in part on themselves in the *garden*, was a far more convincing display of a divine power than merely to have descended now could have been. And though they promise upon this to *believe him*, there is no room to think they would have yielded to conviction; but all they meant was to *insult him* by it, as thinking it impossible he should escape out of their hands.

[g] *If thou art the king of the Jews.*] As this claim seemed to them the most derogatory to the Roman authority, it is no wonder that the *soldiers* grounded their insults on this, rather than on his professing himself *the Son of God*.

[h] *One of the malefactors also.*] We are told indeed by Matthew, in the *plural number*, that *the thieves cast the same in his teeth*; and Mark also says, that *they that were crucified with him reviled him*; and hence some infer that *he* who afterwards proved *penitent*, at first joined in the *blasphemy*: but had that been the case, surely Luke, in so particular a narrative as his, would not have omitted it. I therefore rather conclude, with most *critics*, that it is what is commonly called an *enallage of numbers*, the *plural* being (as elsewhere) put for the *singular* (See *note* f on Mark xiv. 5, sect. cxlv. p. 151, and *note* a on Mark i. 21, sect. xxxv. Vol. VI. p. 190.)

i *When*

SECT. CXC.

Luke XXIII.

same [*reproach, and*] scornfully *blasphemed him* as an impostor, *saying, If thou art the Messiah,* why dost thou not *save thyself and us,* who are now dying with thee? *But the other,* awakened to a sense of his sin, and convinced in his heart that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah, *answered* his companion, *and rebuked him, saying, Dost thou not fear God,* even now *when thou* thyself *art in the same condemnation?* In such an awful circumstance as this, dost thou dare to increase thy crimes with thy dying breath, and to behave thyself so insolently in the immediate view of God's righteous tribunal? *And we indeed* are *justly* thus condemned; *for we receive* no more than *what is due for the* notorious *crimes we have committed: but this* [*man*] *has done nothing* by any means *amiss,* nor is there the least insolence or absurdity in that high claim which he has made, though appearances be for the present so much against it. *And,* having thus rebuked his companion, and testified his full persuasion of the innocence of Jesus, *he* then directed his discourse to him, and *said to Jesus,* looking upon him with the humblest and the most contrite regard, *Lord,* though this wretch derides thy mission, I firmly believe it; and I beg that thou wouldest graciously *remember me when thou comest into* that *thy kingdom,* to which I doubt not but God will raise thee in spite of death and hell[i]. *And Jesus,* turning towards him, *said to him,* with a mixture of the greatest dignity and mercy, *Verily, I say unto thee,* and solemnly assure thee of it as a most certain truth, that *This* very *day thou shalt be with me in paradise,* sharing the entertainments of that garden of God, the abode of happy spirits when separate

be Christ, save thyself and us. [MAT. XXVII. 44. MARK XV.—32.]

40 But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

[i] *When thou comest into thy kingdom.*] Some have inferred from hence, that *this malefactor* had learnt something of Christ in prison, and have urged the possibility of his having exercised, perhaps, a long and deep *repentance* there, against the supposition of the *sudden change* that most have supposed in this case. But *Christ's kingdom* was now the subject of so much discourse, that he might, on that day, and indeed in a few minutes of it, have learnt all that was necessary, as the foundation of this petition. I cannot therefore but look on this happy man (for such, amidst all the ignominy and tortures of the cross, he surely was) as a glorious instance of the power as well as sovereignty of *Divine grace,* which (as many have observed) perhaps, taking the first occasion from the preternatural *darkness,* wrought so powerfully as to produce, by a sudden and astonishing growth in his last moments, all the virtues which could be crowded into so small a space, and which were eminently manifested in his confessing his own guilt, in his admonishing his companion for a crime which he feared would prove fatal to him, in his vindicating the character of Christ, and reposing his confidence in him as the *Lord* of a *kingdom* beyond the grave, when his enemies were triumphing over him, and he himself, abandoned by most of his friends, was expiring on a *cross.* The modesty as well as the faith of his *petition* may also deserve our attentive remark.

[k] *Thou*

separate from the body[k]; and there shall thy departing soul, as soon as thou hast breathed thy last, immediately begin to reap the fruits of that faith which breaks through so dark a cloud, and honours me in the midst of this infamy and distress. SECT. CXC. Luke XXIII. 43

IMPROVEMENT.

How great and glorious does the *Lord Jesus Christ* appear in the midst of all those dishonours which his enemies were now heaping upon him! While these rapacious *soldiers* were dividing the spoils, *parting his raiment among them, and casting lots for his vesture*, God was working in all to crown him with *a glory* which none could take from him, and to make the lustre of it so much the more conspicuous by that *dark cloud* which now surrounded him. John XIX. 23, 24

His enemies *upbraided him* as an *abandoned miscreant*, deserted both by God and man; but he (though able to have *come down from the cross* in a moment, or by one word from thence to have *struck* these insolent wretches *dead* on the place, and to have sent their guilty spirits to accompany the *fiends* under whose influence they were), yet patiently endured all, and was *as a deaf man*, who *heard not* their reproaches, *and as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth*; (Psal. xxxviii. 13.) But as soon as the *penitent thief* addressed him with that humble supplication, the language of repentance, faith, and hope, *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom*, he immediately *hears* and *answers* him: and in how gracious and remarkable a phrase! *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise!* What a triumph was here, not only of *mercy* to the dying *penitent*, but of the strongest faith in God, that when to an eye of sense he seemed to be the most *deserted* and *forgotten* by him, and was on every side beset with the *scorn* of *them that were at ease*, and with the *contempt* of *the proud*, he should speak from the *cross* as from a *throne*, and undertake from thence, not only to dispense *pardons*, but to dispose of *seats in paradise!* Mat. XXVII. 39--43 Luke XXIII. 42. 43

Most ungrateful and most foolish is the conduct of those who take encouragement from hence to *put off their repentance* perhaps to a dying moment: *most ungrateful* in perverting the *grace* of the *Redeemer* into an occasion of renewing their provocations against him, and hardening their hearts in their impieties: and *most*

k *Thou shalt be with me in paradise.*] Bos has shewn (in his *Exercit. Philol.* page 49, 50) that this expression, μετ' ἐμε ἐση, *thou shalt be with me*, was the language used when inviting guests to an entertainment; and the word *paradise* originally signified a *garden of pleasure*, such as those in which the *eastern* monarchs made their magnificent banquets. See *Raphel. Annot. ex Xenoph.* p. 119.

SECT. CXC. *most foolish* to imagine that what *our Lord* did in so singular a circumstance is to be drawn into an ordinary precedent. *This criminal* had, perhaps, never heard of the gospel before; and now how cordially does he embrace it? Probably there are few *saints in glory* who ever honoured *Christ* more illustriously than this dying sinner, acknowledging him to be *the Lord of life*, whom he saw in the agonies of *death*; and pleading his cause when his *friends* and *brethren forsook him*, and *stood afar off*. (Compare Mat. xxvi. 56, and Luke xxiii. 49.)

Luke xxiii. 42.

But such is the corruption of men's hearts, and such the artifice of *Satan*, that all other views of him are overlooked, and nothing remembered, but that he was a notorious offender, who *obtained mercy* in his departing moments. The Lord grant that none who read this story here may be added to the list of those who, *despising the forbearance and long-suffering of God*, and *not knowing that his goodness leads to repentance*, have been emboldened to abuse *this scripture*, so as to perish, either without crying for mercy at all, or crying for it in vain, after having *treasured up* an inexhaustible store of *wrath*, misery, and despair; (Rom. ii. 4, 5.)

SECT. CXCI.

Jesus, having recommended his mother to the care of John, and suffered many agonies and indignities on the cross, expires; amazing prodigies attending his death, and alarming the consciences of the spectators. Mat. XXVII. 45—54. Mark XV. 33—39. Luke XXIII. 44—48. John XIX. 25—30.

JOHN XIX. 25.

SECT. CXCI. *AND* while he suffered all these insults and sorrows, *there stood near the cross of Jesus*, Mary *his mother*[a], *and his mother's sister* (whose name

John XIX. 25.

JOHN XIX. 25.

NOW there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary *the*

a *His mother.*] Neither her own danger, nor the sadness of the spectacle, nor the reproaches and insults the people, could restrain her from performing the last office of duty and tenderness to her *Divine Son* on the cross. Grotius justly observes that it was a noble instance of fortitude and zeal. Now *a sword* (according to Simeon's prophecy, Luke ii. 35) struck through her tender heart, and *pierced* her *very soul*; and perhaps the extremity of her sorrows might so overwhelm her spirits, as to render her incapable of attending the *sepulchre*, which we do not find that she did; nor do we indeed meet with any thing after this concerning her in the *sacred story*, or in *early antiquity*; except that she *continued* among the *disciples* after *our Lord's* ascension, which Luke observes, Acts i. 14. Andreas Cretensis, a writer of the *seventh century*, does indeed tell us she *died* with John at Ephesus, many years after this, in an extreme old age; and it appears, from a *letter* of the *council of Ephesus*, in the *fifth century*, that it was then believed she was *buried there*. But they pretend to shew *her sepulchre* at Jerusalem, and many ridiculous tales are forged concerning her *death*, and *assumption*, or being taken up into heaven, of which the best Popish authors themselves appear heartily ashamed. See *Calmet's Dictionary*, Vol. II. p. 141.

b *His*

the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

name was also *Mary)*, who was [*the wife*] *of Cleopas*[b], *and Mary Magdalene*; and with them also John, his intimate friend; the relater of this story. SECT. CXCI. John XIX. 25.

26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son.

Jesus therefore seeing his mother, and John *the disciple whom he* peculiarly *loved, standing near*, his affectionate care and regard to both, so wrought in his heart in the midst of all his agonies, that he *said to his mother, Woman*[c], *behold thy son*; consider that dear friend of mine as thy own child, and treat him with the same affection and care which thou wouldest shew to me under that near relation[d]. And *then he said to that disciple, Behold thy mother*, and entertain towards her that reverence and love which a child owes to a worthy parent; for I now solemnly with my dying breath bequeath her to thy care. *And from that hour that disciple took her* home *to his own* [*house*], and maintained her most cheerfully and respectfully, as if she had indeed been his own mother. 26 27

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*.

MAT. XXVII. 45. Now [LUKE, it was about the sixth hour, and] from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto

And Jesus having hung upon the cross about three hours, it was *now* near noon, or, according to the Jewish manner of expressing the time, *it was about the sixth hour; and from the sixth hour, there was* an amazing and supernatural *darkness over the whole land* of Judea *till the ninth hour* Mat. XXVII. 45

b *His mother's sister, Mary* [*the wife*] *of Cleopas.*] It is not determined in the *original* whether she was the *wife*, or *mother*, or *daughter* of Cleopas; but *critics* generally suppose she was *his wife*; and that he was also called Alpheus, and was the *father*, as this Mary was the *mother*, of *James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas*, who are therefore called *our Lord's brethren* or kinsmen. (Mat. xiii. 55.) See *note* e on John xiv. 22, p. 309.—Grotius indeed thinks that Cleopas was *her father*, and Alpheus her *husband*. After all, we cannot certainly determine it; but, like most other undeterminable points, it is a matter of no great importance. I know none who has set it in a plainer and juster light than Dr. *Edwards Exercit.* part ii. No. 1, p. 163, *&c. seq.*

c *Said to his mother, Woman.*] We have observed elsewhere that Joseph probably was dead some time before (compare *note* b on John ii. 1, Vol. VI. p. 131, and *note* a on John vi. 42, Vol. VI. p. 430); and as Jesus now shewed the tender concern he had for *his mother* in committing her to the care of John, so this concern that he expressed for her support must have affected her no less than if he had called her *mother*; which some have thought he might not choose to do, to avoid exposing her to the abuses of the populace, by a discovery of her near relation to him. But *woman* was a title he before had used in speaking to *his mother* where no such caution was necessary; and it was frequently applied in ancient times, even to persons that were the most respected. See *note* d on John ii. 4, Vol. VI. p. 132.

d *Behold thy Son.*] Some have explained these words as if they only signified, "*Behold* a person who will carry it to thee as *thy son*, and will take care of thee." But as the tenderness of Jesus for *his mother* is expressed in the *next verse*, in the direction that he gives to John to treat her as *his mother*, it seems more natural to understand this former exhortation as expressive of his kindness for John, and so take it as a direction given to *his mother* to regard him as *her son* with all the affection of a tender parent.

SECT. CXCI.

Mat. XXVII. 46

hour[e], or till three o'clock in the afternoon; during which time it was as dark as if there had been a total eclipse of the sun, though in a natural way it was impossible, as it was now full moon[f]. *And* this darkness, with which the face of nature seemed overspread, was a lively emblem of the darkness and distress of spirit with which the Lord of nature was then overwhelmed, and with which he struggled in the solemn silence, and unutterable bitterness of his soul. But *about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying* in the Hebrew, or rather in the Syriac language, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*[g]*? that is, being interpreted* into other words, *My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* which was as if he had said, O my heavenly Father, wherefore dost thou add to all my other sufferings those which arise from the want of a comfortable sense of thy presence? Wherefore dost thou thus leave me alone in the combat, destitute of those sacred consolations, which thou couldest easily shed abroad upon

unto the ninth hour. [MARK XV. 33. LUKE XXIII. 44.]

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying [Eloi, Eloi], lama sabachthani? that is to say [being interpreted], My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? [MARK XV. 34.]

e *There was darkness over the whole land.*] There are so many places in which γη signifies *a particular country*, and not *the whole earth*, that I have chosen here to follow *our translation*; and the rather, because the farther we suppose *this darkness* to extend, the more unaccountable it is, that no *Heathen writers* should have mentioned it except Phlegon; if he is indeed to be excepted. *A darkness over the whole earth* at once must have been preternatural at any time; and it is morally impossible, that a multitude of accounts of it should not, even by a tradition of many hundred years, have been transmitted to posterity. What is said of the *Chinese chronicles* mentioning it, must be very uncertain; and as of Josephus, his omission of it, I think Dr. More with reason accounts for it, by his unwillingness to mention a fact which had so favourable an aspect on Christianity: and the Jews would, no doubt, disguise it as much as they could, and perhaps might persuade him, and others, who heard the report of it at some distance of time or place, that it was only a *dark cloud*, or a *thick mist*, which the followers of Jesus had exaggerated, because it happened when their Master died. Such representations are exceeding natural to hearts corrupted by infidelity.

f As it was now full moon.] Mr. *Shuckford*, in his *preface* to the *third volume* of his excellent *Connection of the Sacred and Profane History of the World*, has advanced some important considerations to prove, that it is at least very uncertain whether the *Jewish months*, according to the Mosaic institution, began with a *new moon*, and consequently whether their *passover*, which was fixed to the *fourteenth day* of the *first month*, must always happen at *full moon*. But he allows that, towards the decline of their state, it did. And indeed *Josephus*, who, being a *Jewish priest*, is an unexceptionable witness in this case, seems to put it beyond all possibility of doubt; expressly asserting, that the *day of expiation*, and consequently their other *feasts*, *were reckoned by the age of the moon*. (*Joseph. Antiq.* lib. iii. cap. 10, § 3. Δεκατη τω μηνος κατα σεληνην.)

g *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*] It is evident these are Syro-Chaldaic, and not properly Hebrew words; for in the *original* of Psal. xxii. 1, it is not, as here, אלהי למה שבקתני אלהי, but למח עזבתני אלי אלי. Dr. Edwards thinks *our Lord* in his agony repeated the words *twice* with some little variation, saying at one time, *Eloi*, and at the other *Eli*. This is possible; and if it were otherwise, I doubt not but Mark has given us the word exactly, and Matthew a kind of contraction of it. See *Edwards's Exercit.* p. 193—196.

h *Why*

upon my soul, and which thou knowest I have done nothing to forfeit[h]? SECT. CXCI.

47 [And] some of them that stood [by] there, when they heard *that*, said, [Behold] this man calleth for Elias. [MARK XV. 35.]

Jesus by the use of these words, borrowed from the beginning of the twenty-second psalm, gave the spectators a useful hint that the whole of it referred to him; and it might well have led them to observe how many passages of it had then a literal accomplishment in him: but if this was any part of the design, it was not apprehended by them; for the Jews took them in a different sense, *and some of them that stood by there, hearing* [*that*] sound of Eli, *said* in a scornful and insulting manner, *Behold, this* [*man*], who has been used to talk as if he had earth and heaven at command, resolves to keep up the air of the Messiah to the last, and therefore *calls for Elijah* his forerunner, as if he had any authority to bring that great prophet down from paradise to his assistance[i]. Mat. XXVII. 47

JOHN XIX. 28. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the

Immediately *after this* doleful cry, *Jesus knowing that all* the grievous and terrible *things* he had to suffer in the way to death, *were now* upon the point of being perfectly *accomplished*, and finding himself parched with a violent drought, as the consequence of what he had so long endured both in mind and body, *that the scripture might be fulfilled* (Psal. xxii. 15, and lxix. John XIX. 28

h *Why hast thou forsaken me?*] The pious and judicious Lord Chief Justice *Hale* has a strange reflection on these words; "We may (says he with reverence conceive, that at the time of this bitter cup, the *soul* of our blessed Redeemer was for the present overshadowed with so much astonishment and sorrow, as to overpower and cover the distinct sense of the reason of his sufferings, at least in some measure and degree." (*Hale's Contemplations*, Vol. I. p. 72) But the sense given in the *paraphrase* is much more natural. Thus in a most humble and affectionate manner he reminds *his heavenly Father*, that he was only by *imputation* a *sinner*, and had himself done nothing to incur his displeasure.—I choose not, with Dr. *More* (in his *Theological Works*, p. 292), to render it *How far*, or to what degree, *hast thou forsaken me!* because though this would be a just *version* of לָמָה, the Greek word *ινατι*, which answers to it in Matthew, is not liable to such ambiguity.—I conclude with adding, that this interruption of *a joyful sense* of his *Father's presence* (though there was, and could not but be, a rational apprehension of his constant favour, and high approbation of what he was now doing), was as necessary as it was that Christ should suffer at all. For had God communicated to *his Son* on the cross those *strong consolations* which he has given to some of the *martyrs* in their tortures, all *sense of pain*, and consequently all real pain, would have been swallowed up; and the violence done to his *body*, not affecting the *soul*, could not properly have been called *suffering*.

i *And some of them that stood by*, &c.] Whether this was, as Dr. *Edwards* (*Exercit.* p. 196—203), and Mr. *Cradock* (*Harm.* part ii. p. 256), suppose the mistake of some Hellenist Jews, who did not understand the Syro-Chaldaic language; or whether it proceeded from his being raised so high, that, amidst the rude noise around him, they did not distinctly hear; I do not pretend to say. Perhaps the *malice* of those who did hear what he said, might *misrepresent his words*, to prevent any serious reflections on the psalm from which they were taken, and to expose him to farther contempt.

SECT. CXCI.

some of *the tombs* there *were opened* by the earthquake: *and*, which was much more astonishing, a little while after, while the monuments continued unclosed, *many bodies of* those *holy men* 52 *who were sleeping* there *were raised* from the 53 dust of death[o], *And came out of the tombs after the resurrection of* [*Jesus*], *and entered into* Jerusalem, *the holy city, and appeared unto many*[p]; attesting the truth of that important fact, and declaring their own rescue from the grave, as a kind of first fruits of his power over death, which should at length accomplish a general resurrection.

were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept, arose,

Mat. XXVII.

53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

Mark XV. 39

And when the Roman *centurion, who stood over-against him*, and guarded the execution, *saw that he so cried out* with such strength of voice, *and* such firm confidence in God, even at the moment when he *expired*; [*and*] also *saw what was* [*then*] *done* in so miraculous a manner, in those amazing prodigies that attended his death; *he glorified God* by a free confession of his persuasion of the innocence of Jesus, *saying, Certainly this was a righteous man*; [*yea*], notwithstanding all the vile reproaches which have

MARK XV. 39. And when the centurion which stood over-against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost [LUKE, *and* saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man], truly this man was

Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 73, 74, tells us, that it is about a span wide at the upper part, and two spans deep; after which it closes, but opens again below (as may be seen in another chapel below contiguous to the side of Calvary), and runs down to an unknown depth in the earth. He adds, that every man's sense and reason must convince him that this is a natural and genuine breach.

o *Many bodies of holy men were raised.*] That ingenious writer Mr. *Fleming*, who abounds with a vast number of peculiar conjectures, thinks that these were some of the most eminent *saints* mentioned in the *Old Testament*; and that they appeared in some extraordinary splendour, and were known by *revelation*, as Eve's original and relation was to Adam, or Moses and Elijah to the *disciples* at the *transfiguration*. He ventures particularly to conjecture who they were; but does not mention David among them. (*Fleming of the First Resurrection*, p. 29—38.) But Mr. *Pierce* (on *Colos.* p. 68) maintains, that it is very improbable that, had other *saints* of former ages risen, David should have been excluded; and since Acts ii. 34, proves that he did not now rise, he concludes, that *the saints who rose* were some who died but a little before, perhaps such as had believed in Christ, and were well known to surviving *disciples*. It was to be sure a most surprising event, and Dr. Whitby supposes, John v. 25, was a prophecy relating to it.]

p *And came out of the tombs after the resurrection of Jesus*, &c.] Consequently it seems that *the tombs stood open* all the *sabbath*, when the law would not allow any attempt to close them. What an astonishing spectacle! especially if *their resurrection* was not instantaneously accomplished, but by such slow degrees, as that represented in *Ezekiel's vision*: (Ezek. xxxvii.) Yet I do not take upon me to say that it was so; for it is unprofitable too particularly to conjecture on such circumstances which are not recorded. For this reason also I pretend not to say what became of these persons; though, as one can hardly imagine they either immediately returned to their graves, or that they continued to live on earth (because it is only said, they *appeared to many*), it seems most natural to imagine they *ascended into heaven* with, or after, *our Lord*: perhaps from some solitude, to which they might be directed to retire during the intermediate days, and to wait in devout exercises for their *change*, for surely, had they *ascended* in the view of others, the memory of such a fact could not have been lost.

q *Certainly*

was the Son of God. [MAT. XXVII. 54. —LUKE XXIII. 47.]

MAT. XXVII.—54. And they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, *and* they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

have been cast upon him, *truly this man was* what he declared himself to be, even *the Son of God* himself[q]. *And* the soldiers also that attended the centurion, even *they that were with him guarding Jesus* on the cross, *seeing the earthquake and those* other *things which were* now *done, feared greatly, and said* in like manner, *Truly this* Jesus of Nazareth, whom we have been thus insulting and murdering, *was the Son of God*; and his heavenly Father will certainly avenge his quarrel very terribly on us, and on the whole nation of the Jews, who have delivered him to us.

SECT. CXCI.

Mat. XXVII. 54

LUKE XXIII. 48. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned.

And all the multitude[r] *that were come together* on this remarkable occasion, *to* see *this* doleful *spectacle* even some of those who but a little before had been insulting him in his dying agonies, *when they saw the things which were done, returned, beating their breasts* for sorrow and remorse; in terrible expectation that some sad calamity would speedily befall them and their country, for the indignities and cruelties they had offered to a person for whom God had expressed so high a regard, even in his greatest distress.

Luke XXIII. 48

IMPROVEMENT.

AND surely we, when we *return* from such a view of it as this, have reason to *smite upon our breasts* too, and to be most deeply affected with what we have *heard and seen* in this lively description.

Luke xxii i.48.

[q] *Certainly this was a righteous man*, &c.] The most learned Mr. *Wasse* of Aynho (whose death since the publication of my *first volume* is an irreparable loss to the commonwealth of letters) has a *dissertation* on these *words of the centurion*, in the *first number* of the *Bibliotheca Literaria*, to which I am indebted for several hints in the *paraphrase* on these *verses*; but I have ventured to depart from him, in not entirely incorporating Mat. xxvii. 54. with Mark xv. 39. and Luke xxiii. 47. as the *two latter* only mention the effect of this surprising sight on the *centurion*, while Matthew give us also an account of the effect it had upon the *soldiers*, who very probably might repeat the words their *officer* had spoke but just before, in expressing their sentiments on this occasion.—I shall only add, that *Elsner*, in a very learned *note* on this place, has shewn that some of the *Heathens* had a notion among them, that *prodigies*, especially *storms* and *earthquakes*, sometimes attended the *death* of extraordinary persons, peculiarly *dear to the gods*, and among other passages, mentions that of Plutarch, in which he tells us, that when Ptolemy had crucified Cleomenes, while the body hung dead on the cross, a large *serpent* wound itself round his face, and defended it from birds of prey; from whence the Egyptians concluded he was a *hero* more than mortal, and a *son of the gods*. See *Elsn. Observ.* Vol. VI. p. 126, 127.

[r] *All the multitude.*] That is, great multitudes; for it is no way neeessary to suppose that every individual person present was thus impressed. The *conviction* produced by these *prodigies* undoubtedly made way for the *conversion* of such a multude by the preaching of the *apostles*, on the descent of the *Spirit*, which was but *seven weeks* after, when these things were fresh in their memories. Acts ii. 41.

SECT. CXCI.

tion. Let us set ourselves as with the *mother of Jesus*, and the *beloved disciple*, at the foot of the *cross*; and *see* whether *there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow, wherewith the Lord afflicted him in the day of his fierce anger*, (Lam. i. 12.) Well might *the sun* grow pale at the sight; well might *the earth* tremble to support it! How obdurate must the hearts of those sinners be, who could *make a mock* of all his anguish, and sport themselves with his dying groans! But surely the blessed *angels* who were now, though in an invisible crowd, surrounding the accursed tree, beheld him with other sentiments: admiring and adoring the various *virtues* which he expressed in every circumstance of his behaviour; and which, while this *sun of righteousness* was setting, gilded and adorned all the horizon. Let us likewise pay our homage to them, and observe with admiration his *tenderness* to his surviving *parent*; his *meekness* under all these injuries and provocations; his steady *faith in God* in an hour of the utmost distress; and his *concern* to accomplish all the purposes of his life, before he yielded to the stroke of death.

John xix. 25, 26 Luke xxiii. 44, 45 Mat. xxvii. 49 John xix. 26, 27 28--30

Yet with what amazement must the holy *angels* hear *that cry from the Son of God*, from the darling of heaven, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* Let not any of the *children of God* wonder if their *heavenly Father* sometimes withdraw from them the sensible and supporting manifestations of his presence, when *Christ* himself was thus exercised; and let them remember that *faith* never appears with greater glory than when, in language like this, it bursts through a thick cloud, and owns, *the God of Israel*, and *the Saviour*, even while *he is a God that hideth himself* from us, (Is. xlv. 15.) May we, in our approaching combat with the *king of terrors*, find him enervated by the *death* of our dear *Lord*, who thus conquered even when he fell! May we thus *breathe out* our willing and composed *spirits into our Father's hands*, with a language and faith like his, as *knowing whom we have believed, and being persuaded that he is able to keep what we commit to him until that day!* (2 Tim. i. 12.)

Mat. xxvii. 46 Luke xxiii. 46.

With pleasure may we survey the awful *tokens* by which God owned his dying *Son*, and wiped away the infamy of his *cross*. The *veil* is now *rent* by the death of *Jesus*; let us be encouraged to *come boldly to the throne of grace*, and to draw near to *the holiest of all, into which he has entered with his own blood*, (Heb. iv. 16. ix. 12.) May God render the knowledge of the *cross of Christ*, the blessed means of shaking the consciences of men with powerful *convictions*, and of raising them from the *death of sin* to a *life of holiness!* And may we be so *planted together in the likeness of his death*, that we may at length *also* be planted *in the likeness of his resurrection!* (Rom. vi. 5.)

Mat. xxvii. 51 53 54

SECT.

SECT. CXCII.

While Christ continues hanging on the cross, his side is pierced, but his legs are not broken: Joseph begs the corpse, and lays it with respect in his own sepulchre. Mat. XXVII. 35—61. Mark XV. 40, *to the end.* Luke XXIII. 49. *to the end.* John XIX. 31. *to the end.*

LUKE XXIII. 49.

AND all his acquaintance, and [many] women, [MARK, who, when he was in Galilee, followed him and ministered unto him, [*and* followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things: [MAT. XXVII. 55. MARK XV. 40, 41.—]

LUKE XXIII. 49.

AND while our Lord was thus expiring on the cross, *all his* familiar *acquaintance* mingled themselves with the crowd of spectators, and *stood at a distance viewing these things* with weeping eyes and sympathizing hearts: *and* of this number there were *many* pious *women* [a], *who had attended him when he was in Galilee, and* had there *ministered to him*, and liberally assisted him and his disciples with their substance; compare Luke viii. 2, 3. Vol. VI. p. 319, 320.) [*and*] *had* now *followed him from Galilee* to Jerusalem, where they had constantly attended on his preaching in the temple, nor would they leave him in this great and last trial: *Among whom* there *was Mary Magdalane, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses; and* there was also *the mother of* the apostles James and John, whom we have so often mentioned as *the sons of Zebedee* the fisherman [b]; *and Salome* also [c], *and many other* zealous

SECT. CXCII. Luke XXIII. 49

MAT. XXVII. 56. Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James [the less,] and [of] Joses, and the mother

Mat. XXVII. 56

a *Many* pious *women.*] I hope I shall give no offence by saying, what I am sure I say very seriously, that the frequent mention which is made in the *evangelists* of the generous and courageous zeal of some *pious women* in the service of Christ, and especially of the faithful and resolute constancy with which they attended him in these last scenes of his suffering, might very possibly be intended to obviate that haughty and senseless contempt which the pride of *men*, often irritated by those vexations to which their own irregular passions have exposed them, has in all ages affected to throw on *that sex* which, probably in the sight of God, constitute by far the better half of mankind; and to whose care and tenderness the wisest and best of men generally owe and ascribe much of the daily comfort and enjoyment of their lives.

b *And the mother of the sons of Zebedee.*] Though the construction of the *original* be dubious, yet I think it very rational to conclude that this *mother of the sons of Zebedee*, or of *James the greater* and *John*, was a different person from the *mother* of *James the less* and *Joses*; both as *the sons of Zebedee*, though such distinguished friends of Christ are never called *his brethren*, as James and Joses are, (Mat. xiii. 55. and Mark vi. 3. Vol. VI. p. 385,) and as some *scriptures* plainly intimate that no more than *two* of the *apostles* were *the sons of Zebedee.*—(See Mat. x. 2. xxvi. 37. Mark iii. 17.)

c *And Salome.*] This Salome, who is mentioned here by Mark, is commonly supposed to be *the mother of Zebedee's children* mentioned by Matthew: but as it is expressly said there were *many other women present*, she might possibly be some other *disciple*, and there is no sufficient reason to conclude

SECT. CXCII.

zealous and affectionate *women, who came up with him to* this passover at *Jerusalem*, and who had the courage to attend him, even when his
Mat. XXVII. apostles themselves had forsaken him and fled.

56 *Then*, as the day was drawing to a close, *the*
John XIX. 31. *Jews* were very solicitous, *because it was* now *the preparation* for the sabbath, *that the bodies might not remain* all night *upon the cross*, which their law expressly forbad, (Deut. xxi. 22, 23.) and more especially they were concerned that this profanation might not happen *on the sabbath-day, (for that sabbath*, being the first which followed the passover, *was a great day* of peculiar solemnity [d]:) they went therefore and *entreated Pilate* that he would send an order to the soldiers, who were watching the crucified persons, *that their legs might be broken*, the more effectually to dispatch them, if they were not quite dead, *and* [*that*] *they might* then *be taken*
32 *away* [e]. And Pilate upon this gave orders that it should accordingly be done: *the soldiers therefore* who guarded the execution, *came and brake the legs of the first* malefactor, or of him that hung nearest the place where they had been sitting; *and* then passing by Jesus, who hung in the middle, they went and brake the legs *of*
33 *the other who was crucified with him. But coming* afterwards *to Jesus, they did not break his legs, as they saw* it was needless since it was plain *he was already dead*: and they were now impressed with some degree of reverence even to his corpse, by the amazing prodigies which they
34 had just now seen. *But* yet *one of the soldiers* had so much boldness and inhumanity, that he *pierced his side with a* long lance or *spear*, which he had in his hand; *and immediately there came out* of the wound both *blood and water* mingled with it [f] which made it plainly appear that had

mother of Zebedee's children, [and Salome, and many other women, which came up with him unto Jerusalem.] [MARK XV. —40, 41.]

JOHN XIX. 31. The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day, (for that sabbath-day was an high-day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away.

32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs.

34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there-out blood and water.

conclude they were the same. (Compare Mark xvi. 1.)

[d] *For that sabbath was a great day.*] It was (as Dr. *Whitby* in his *paraphrase* has well observed) not only *a sabbath*, but the *second day* of the *feast of unleavened bread*, from whence they reckoned the *weeks* to *pentecost*; and also *the day* for presenting and offering the *sheaf of new corn*: so that it was indeed a *treble* solemnity.—See *note* b on Luke vi. 1. Vol. VI. p. 267.

[e] *Might be taken away.*] It was customary, as Bishop *Pearson*, *(on the Creed*, p. 218.) has abundantly proved, to let the *bodies* of persons who had been executed *continue on the crosses* or *stakes* till they were eaten up by birds of prey: but as this was forbidden to the Jews, the *Roman governors* probably used to oblige them by permitting such *bodies* as belonged to them to be *buried*.

[f] *There came out blood and water.*] I do not pretend to determine whether this was, as Dr. *Drake* supposes (in his *Anatomy*, Vol. I. p. 106.) the small quantity of *water* inclosed in the *pericardium*, in which the

had he been living, the wound would have been mortal, having reached his very heart; and consequently put it out of all doubt that he was really dead, before he was taken down from the cross. SECT. CXCII. John XIX. 34.

35 And he that saw it, bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

And as this was so important, and indeed so fundamental a point[g], it may not be improper to add, that it was *one who saw* [*it*] who *has borne* [*this*] *testimony*, and recorded so remarkable a circumstance; *and* therefore *his witness is* undoubtedly *true: and* now he is writing this he solemnly declares that *he knows*, by the most certain testimony of his senses, *that what he saith is true;* and he makes this declaration *that you*, whoever you are, into whose hands this history may come sooner or later, *may believe*, and may be confirmed in your adherence to that gospel which is established on the death and resurrection of Christ. 35

36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

For, however inconsiderable *these things* may appear, they *were* permitted in the course of Divine Providence to be *done*, *that* thus *the scripture might be* remarkably *fulfilled*, in what it says concerning the paschal lamb, which did in so many circumstances resemble Christ (Exod. xii. 46, and Num. ix. 12.) "*Not a bone of it shall be broken*[h]:" a precept which, among many others, was given on purpose to lead the minds of believers to reflect on the harmony and unity of design carried on (though by such a variety of persons, in no concert with each other) under the Old Testament and under the New. 36

37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

And again, there is *another scripture*, which *says*, concerning the Jews, when they are to be converted to the Messiah in the latter days, "*They shall look on him whom they have pierced*," (Zech. xii. 10.) for which reason 37

the heart swims; or whether the *cruor* was now almost coagulated, and separated from the *serum*: either way, it was a certain proof of *Christ's death*; for he could not have survived such a *wound* had it been given him in perfect health.

[g] So important and fundamental a point.] The grand evidence of *Christ's mission* in his *resurrection*, which implies the certainty of his *death*: and this *crucifixion* might have seemed, on a slight view, a less proper *execution* than some others, such as *beheading*, *burning*, and the like; but *this wound* would effectually exclude all pretences of his having been *taken down alive* by his friends; and accordingly *that* is an evasion which, false and malicious as his enemies were, we do not find they ever had recourse to.

[h] *Not a bone of it shall be broken.*] Dr. *Arthur Young* (in his *Historical Dissertation* on *Revelation designed to prevent Superstition*, Vol. I. p. 196, 203, 204.) has a particular thought on the *reason of this prohibition*, that it was intended to oppose the manner in which the *Egyptian sacrifices* were sometimes *pulled to pieces*: but I think the *reason* suggested in the *paraphrase* much more certain and important. It is very well illustrated in *An Essay on the several Dispensations of God*, &c. *Pref.* p. xxii. *& seq.*

SECT. CXCII.

reason God permitted them not only to pierce the hands and the feet of Jesus with nails, but also to open his side by that deep and large wound which we have now been mentioning.

John XIX. 37.

Mark XV. 42. *And* quickly *after these things, as* it was near sun-set, and *the evening was now come, because* (as we have observed) *it was the preparation, or* the close of *the day before the sabbath* (John xix. 31.) for it was Friday evening, and the sabbath, which would begin at six o'clock, was near at hand, in which no work could lawfully be done; *Behold, there came* to the governor's palace *a* certain *rich man of Arimathea* (*a city of the Jews*, anciently called Ramoth, which lay in the tribe of Ephraim, and was the city of Samuel, that celebrated prophet), and he was *named Joseph*, and was a person of considerable note, *being an honourable counsellor*, or member of the sanhedrim, who had a general reputation as *a benevolent and upright man.*

Luke XXIII. 50

51 *The same* was not concerned with the rest of his fellow-senators in putting Jesus to death, and *had not given* the concurrence of *his vote to the counsel and action of them* that condemned him; [*but was one*] *who also himself* humbly and affectionately *waited for the kingdom of God, being* indeed *a disciple of Jesus, though secretly;* because he durst not openly profess his belief in him *for fear of the Jews* and their rulers, who

52 were so strongly prejudiced against him. *This man*, awakened by the prodigies attending his death to greater courage than he had before, though he knew it must necessarily draw upon him the hatred and contempt of his brethren, yet *went in boldly to* the presence of *Pilate*[i], *and begged* his permission *that he might take away the body of Jesus*, to preserve it from further insults, and bury it in a decent and respectful manner.

Mark XV. 44. *And* when *Pilate* heard his request, considering how lingering an execution that of the cross was, he *thought it strange if he were already dead*, and would not easily believe it; *and* therefore, *having called the centurion to him*, who was appointed to guard the bodies, *he asked him whether he had been dead any time.*

45 *And when he knew*

MARK XV. 42. And now [JOHN, after this] when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath; [MAT. XXVII. 57.—JOHN XIX. 38.]

LUKE XXIII. 50. Behold, [there came a rich man of Arimathea,] [LUKE, a city of the Jews,] named Joseph, [MARK, an honourable counsellor,] *and he was* a good man, and a just: [MAT. XXVII.—57.—MARK XV. 43. LUKE XXIII. 51.—]

—51 The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them; [*but was one*] who also himself waited for the kingdom of God, [JOHN, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews.] [MAT. XXVII.—57. MARK XV.—43.—JOHN XIX.—38.—]

52 This man went [MARK, in boldly] unto Pilate, and begged [JOHN, that he might take away the body of Jesus.] [MAT. XXVII. 58.—MARK XV.—43. JOHN XIX.—38.—]

MARK XV. 44. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead; and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

45 And when he knew

i *Went in boldly to Pilate.*] It was indeed a courageous act for this rich and noble *senator* thus publicly to own his friendship to Jesus in the midst of his greatest infamy; and a person of such sagacity could not but know that, if a *resurrection* should happen, nothing would have been more natural than that he should have been brought into question as a *confederate* in the pretended *fraud* of conveying him away.

k *Swathed*

knew *it* of the centurion, [JOHN, Pilate gave him leave,] [*and* commanded the body to be delivered] to Joseph. [MAT. XXVII. —58. JOHN XIX.—38.—]

knew [*it*] *of the centurion*, and was certainly informed that, besides all the appearances of his having been dead before, he was afterwards stabbed to the very heart, *Pilate*, without any farther scruple, *gave him leave*, [*and*] *commanded the body to be delivered to Joseph:* which he might be the more willing to do, as he was thoroughly convinced that Jesus was innocent; and it was generally thought by the heathens that the spirits of the departed received some advantage from the honours of a funeral paid to their bodies.

SECT. CXCII.

Mark XV. 45.

46—And [Joseph] bought fine linen, and [JOHN, came therefore, and] took down [JOHN, the body of Jesus,] and wrapped [it in a clean linen cloth.] [MAT. XXVII. 59. LUKE XXIII. 53.—JOHN XIX.—38.]

And Joseph therefore, being thus authorized by Pilate, *having bought* a large piece of *fine linen*, *came* to mount Calvary, *and* with proper assistance *took down the body of Jesus* from the cross, *and wrapped it* up *in a* kind of winding-sheet of *clean linen cloth.*

46

JOHN XIX. 39. And there came also Nicodemus, (which at the first came to Jesus by night,) and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight.*

And there came also at the same time with Joseph to the cross, *Nicodemus*, another member of the sanhedrim, of whom repeated mention has been made in the preceding story, and *who* was he that *at the first* beginning of his public ministry *came to Jesus by night* (John iii. 1, 2.) *and*, as he was now grown more courageous than before, to testify his great regard for Jesus, he *brought* with him *a mixture of myrrh and aloes*, [*that weighed*] *about an hundred pounds.*

John XIX. 39.

40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

To prepare *then* for his interment, *they took the body of Jesus*, without regarding the reproach to which it might expose them, *and swathed it up in* a great many folds of *linen*[k], together *with the spices (according to the Jewish custom of burying)*, intending to embalm it in a more exact manner, as soon as the sabbath was over; and hoping that in the mean time the spices lying near the body might preserve it from the least taint of corruption.

40

41—Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new sepulchre.

42 There laid they Jesus therefore [in *Joseph's* own new tomb, which he had hewn,] [LUKE, in stone,]

Now it happened very commodiously for his immediate interment, that *in the* very neighbourhood of the *place where he was crucified, there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre* belonging to Joseph. *There laid they Jesus therefore in* [*Joseph's*] *own new tomb, which he had* lately ordered to be *hewn in stone out*

41

42

k *Swathed it up in linen.*] This I take to be the most literal *translation* of the words ἐδησαν αὐτο ὀθονιοις; for ὀθονια were a kind of *linen rollers*, in which, as *Elsner* has shewn (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 347.) the *easterns swathed up their dead.* It was, no doubt, by *miracle*, that when Christ arose he disentangled himself from these *swathes.*

l Made

SECT. excii.

out of a solid *rock;* to which therefore there could be no passage but by the door, and *in which no man was ever yet laid*, so that there could be no room to imagine any other person rose from thence. And this they did without first carrying the body into any house to embalm it; *because* (as we have said before) *it was the Jewish preparation-day, and the sabbath drew on*, which did not allow their undertaking a work of so much labour and time: to be ready therefore for the rest commanded on the sabbath-day, they used no farther ceremony in interring him, and chose a most convenient place to do it with dispatch, *for the sepulchre was* very *near at hand.*

John XIX. 42.

And Joseph having thus interred him in his own tomb, and so (as it was prophesied concerning the Messiah, Isa. liii. 9.) "made his grave with the rich in his death[1]," he took care to make all things secure, *and having rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre*, to block up the entrance, *he went away* to his own home.

Mat. XXVII. 60

And when Joseph and Nicodemus came, and took down Jesus from the cross, *Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary*, who (as was said before) was *the mother of* James the less and *Joses* (Mat. xxvii. 56, p. 421.) *and* the rest of *the women also who came with him from Galilee*, and so affectionately attended during the time of his crucifixion, were now desirous to see how they disposed of him; and therefore when they carried off the corpse, these pious women *followed after* them, *and sitting over-against the sepulchre*, into which they saw them enter, *beheld* with diligent observation *where and how his body was laid.*

Luke XXIII. 55

56

And perceiving that they did not embalm him, but only wound him up in linen with the dry spices, they resolved to perform this last office of duty and affection to him in

stone,] [MARK, out of a rock,] [JOHN, wherein was never man yet laid:] because [LUKE, that day was the] Jews [LUKE, preparation, and the sabbath drew on;] for the sepulchre was nigh at hand. [MAT. XXVII. 60.—MARK XV.—46.—LUKE XXIII.—53, 54. JOHN XIX.—41.]

MAT. XXVII.—60. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. [MARK XV.—46.]

LUKE XXIII. 55. [And Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary,] [MARK, the mother of Joses], and the women also which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and [sitting over-against the sepulchre,] beheld [MARK, where] and how his body was laid. [MAT. XXVII. 61. MARK XV. 47.]

56 And they returned and

[1] Made his grave with the rich in his death.] Let me here be permitted to mention the *criticism* of a celebrated *divine* on this passage of Isaiah, which having never (that I know of) been published, may be new to many, as it was to me. Observing that the word דשעים may be *the dual number*, and that עשיר is *the singular*, he would suppose a kind of *hendiadys* in the construction, and render it, "*His death and burial shall be with two criminals, and with one rich man;* that is, after having expired between two malefactors, a rich man (that is, Joseph of Arimathea) shall undertake the care of his funeral."—But I must acknowledge that no *version* of the words pleases me so well on the whole as that of Dr. Sykes, which I read since I wrote the *paraphrase* above. ויתן *Nevertheless he shall avenge* or recompense *his grave upon the wicked, and his death upon the rich:* or, which is equivalent to the former, but perhaps more exact, *He shall avenge his grave* (that is, his death which brings *him* down to it) *on the wicked, and on the rich when he dies,* במותו. See Dr. *Sykes* on *the Truth of Christianity*, p. 256.

and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath-day according to the commandment.

in the completest and most respectful manner they could; *and* therefore *they* immediately *returned* into the city, *and* before the day of preparation was quite finished, they *provided* a great quantity of *spices and balms* for that purpose, that nothing might prevent them from engaging in it as soon as the first day of the week should open; *and*, in the mean time, they *rested on the sabbath-day, according to the* Divine *commandment*, which they would not violate even on so solemn an occasion as this.

SECT. CXCII.

Luke XXIII. 5

IMPROVEMENT.

WE have seen the sorrows of our expiring *Lord:* let us now, like these pious *women*, raise our eyes to him with an holy and unfeigned affection, and behold him pale and breathless on the accursed tree. Let us view him by faith, till the eye affects the heart, and till we learn to *glory in nothing but his cross, whereby the world* may be *crucified to us, and we* may be crucified *to the world.* (Gal. vi. 14.)

Mat. XXVII. 55, 56

How wonderfully does the providence of God appear to have regarded *the body of Jesus*, which had so long been the *temple* of the indwelling Deity; even when it was deserted of that *Spirit* which had lately animated it; and while it *hung* (amazing thought, that it ever should have *hung!) between the bodies* of *two thieves* on a *cross*, without the gates of *Jerusalem!* He, who has *all hearts* in his hand, interposed by a secret but powerful influence on the *soldiers*, who *brake the legs* of the *malefactors*, to spare those of *Christ;* that so nothing which looked like a *prophecy* of him should want its proper *accomplishment.* But *his side was pierced;* and how deep was the wound, when *immediately there came out of it blood and water!* Happy emblem of the blessed effect of his death! *He came* both *by water and blood* (as *he who saw and testified* this important fact leads us to improve it, 1 John v. 6); and by this means at once *atones* the injured justice of God, and *purifies* the souls of them that believe in him.

John XIX. 31, 32 33 34 35

Our indignation rises against the man that could, by such an outrage as this, abuse the *dead body* of our *Redeemer:* but oh, let us seriously remember the hand which *our sins* had in all that was now done. *He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities:* (Isa. liii. 5.) And therefore it is said concerning those *on whom the ends of the world are to come*, that *they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn;* (Zech. xii. 10.) May we *mourn* over him with a genuine evangelical sorrow, when we consider *whom* we *have pierced;* and how deep and how often we have *pierced him;* and upon what slight temp-

37

SECT. CXCII.

tations; and under how many engagements rather to have bathed his wounds with our tears, and even to have exposed our own hearts to the sharpest weapon by which the madness of sinners might have attempted to injure him.

Mark xv. 43. John xix. 39. Mark xv. 46. John xix. 40. Mat. xxvii. 60

The *boldness* of *Joseph*, and even of *Nicodemus* himself, deserves our notice on such an occasion. They *are not ashamed* of the infamy of his *cross*, but come with all holy reverence and affection to *take down* those sacred remains of *Jesus*; nor did they think the finest *linen*, or the choicest *spices*, too valuable on such an occasion. But who can describe their consternation and distress when they saw *him*, who they *trusted should have delivered Israel*, a cold and bloody corpse in their arms; and left *him* in the *sepulchre* of *Joseph*, whom they expected to have seen on the *throne of David*? —We leave for the present his *enemies* in triumph, and his *friends* in tears, till *his resurrection*; which soon confounded the rage of the former, and revived the hopes of the latter; *hopes* which must otherwise have been for ever intombed under that *stone* with which they now covered him. But happy and comfortable is the thought that this his transient *visit to the grave* has (as it were) left a perfume in the *bed of dust*, and reconciled the believer to dwelling a while in the *place where the Lord lay!*

SECT. CXCIII.

Judas confessing his guilt, returns the money he had received from the chief priests, and then hangs himself. The Jews the next day demand, and procure a guard to be set on Christ's sepulchre. Mat. XXVII. 3—10, 62, *to the end.*

MAT. XXVII. 3.

SECT. CXCIII.

Mat. XXVII. 3

HAVING thus finished the account of the death of Jesus, it may be convenient here to mention the miserable end of that perfidious disciple by whom he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies. The Jewish rulers having delivered Jesus to the Roman governor, and having prevailed upon him to give orders for his execution, *then Judas, who had betrayed him, when he saw* to his surprise *that he was condemned* by Pilate, and that they were leading him forth to die upon the cross, to which he seemed determined to submit, though he could so easily have rescued himself from it[a], was seized with great terror

MAT. XXVII. 3.

THEN Judas which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought

[a] *Then Judas*, &c.] For the proper place of *this story*, which is here inserted out of its *order*, see *note* [a] on John xix. 16, p. 400. Matthew has introduced it immediately after the Jews had *delivered Jesus to Pilate*; but after this the Jews were so intent on per-

sect. cxciii.

Mat. xxvii.

brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

terror and agony of conscience; and *repenting* of the fatal bargain he had made, whereby he had brought such a load of guilt on his own soul, he *carried back the thirty pieces of silver* which they had given him *to the chief priests and the elders*, while they were together in the temple that morning; for they resorted thither with a specious appearance of piety, before they followed the multitude to Calvary to see the execution. *And* coming in among them in a wild disorder, he *said* to them, Oh Sirs! *I have sinned* in a most desperate manner, *in that I have betrayed innocent blood* to you; for I am well convinced, that Jesus my Master has done nothing to deserve this punishment to which you have delivered him; and I am not able to bear the thought of the concern I have had in it. *And they answered* with the steady coolness of those who knew no shame or remorse for their wickedness, *What* [*is that*] *to us*, whether thou thinkest him innocent or not? *See thou* [*to that*]: it is sufficient for us that we know he is guilty, whether such a wretch as thou art approvest or condemnest our sentence. *And throwing down the pieces of* silver *money in the temple*, in their very presence, with all the marks of agony and distress, *he withdrew; and going away* to the brow of a hill, in some retired and melancholy place, *he* there *hanged himself*; but the rope breaking by the force with which he threw himself off, he fell down the precipice, and burst asunder with the force of his fall, so that all his bowels gushed out[b]; and he lay expiring

3 4 Saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What *is that* to us? see thou *to that*.

5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

persuading Pilate to consent to his death, that there was hardly time for the *sanhedrim's* adjourning to the *temple*, where this occurrence happened, before they had prevailed with Pilate to *condemn him*: and as Judas must have often heard his *Master* say he should be *crucified*, Pilate's order for his execution must have more sensibly affected him than the Jews passing sentence on him, who had not then the power of putting any one to death.—The word τότε, *then*, with which the *evangelist* begins this story, may be taken in some *latitude* to introduce the mention of an occurrence which happened *about that time*, whether a little *before* or *after*, and need not be interpreted with so much rigour as to determine it to an assertion of observing the exactest *order* in all circumstances. See *note*[a] on Mat. xxvii. 27, p. 390.

[b] *And going away, he hanged himself;* but the rope breaking, &c.] This method which Mr. *Le Clerc*, (*Harm.* p. 527) and several other learned *critics*, have taken, of reconciling Matthew with what is afterwards said of this fact (Acts i. 18), that *falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out*); appears to me much preferable to that of those who would render απηγξαλο, *he was stifled*, or *suffocated, with excess of grief* (see *La Motte* of *Inspir.* p. 155): *a version*, which none of the authorities I have seen seem sufficient to justify. Nor is it necessary to suppose with Dr. *Lightfoot* (*Hor. Hebr.* on Mat. xxvii. *b*, and Acts i. 18), that Judas was carried away by the *devil*, and *strangled* in the air, and being thrown from thence in the sight of all the city, was *dashed in pieces* by the violence of the fall.

SECT. CXCIII.

Mat. XXVII.

piring, in a most painful and terrible manner, a spectacle of horror to all that beheld him, alive, or dead, as a multitude of spectators did. (Compare Acts i. 18, 19.)

6 *And the chief priests, taking* up *the pieces of silver*, were at some loss how they should dispose of them; for they *said, It is not lawful* for us *to put them into the* chest which is called Corban, or the sacred *treasury, because it is the price of blood*, and would in effect be offering to God the life of a man. And these hypocrites scrupled such a point of ceremony, while they still persisted in their resolution to destroy Jesus, which, if they had desired it, they might yet 7 have prevented. *But* afterwards, when they met in a body about some other business, *having consulted together* what they should do with those pieces of money, *they bought with them* that close in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, which is called *The potters field*[c], *for a burying-place of foreigners* who had no sepulchres of their own, and whose bodies they scrupled to lay 8 with those of their own holy nation. And *therefore*, by the way, *that field was called*, in the Syriac language, Aceldama, that is, *The field of blood* (Acts i. 19); and it bears that name even *to this day*, because it was purchased with that money which was the price paid for the blood of Jesus, and was in effect the purchase of the blood of Judas too.

9 *Then was that fulfilled* in a very remarkable manner, *which was spoken by the prophet*[d], (Zech.

6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potters field, to bury strangers in.

8 Wherefore that field was called, the field of blood, unto this day.

9 (Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the pro-

c *The potters field.*] *Thirty pieces of silver* may seem a very inconsiderable price for a field so near Jerusalem; but as Grotius well observes, the ground was probably much spoiled by digging it up for *earth* to make *potters vessels*; so that it was now unfit for tillage or pasture, and consequently of small value.

d *Which was spoken by the prophet*] Most *copies* read it, *by Jeremiah the prophet*; yet it is universally known that these words are found no where in Jeremiah, but in Zechariah (chap. xi. 13): it appears to me very unnatural to say with Dr. *Lightfoot* (*Hor. Hebr. in loc.*) that *all the prophetic writings* might be called the *book of Jeremiah*; because in ancient times the prophecy of Jeremiah was put at the beginning of the volume of the *prophets*: nor would the granting this fact account for the expression of its being *spoken by him*, Nor am I at all convinced by Mr. *Joseph Mede's* reasonings (see his *Works*, p. 963), that these words, though recorded by Zechariah, or rather found in his book, were *originally* spoken by Jeremiah, and by some accident displaced: a principle on which the whole credit of the *prophecies* might be destroyed. It would be a much less dishonour to the sacred writings, to suppose a small error in the pen of some early *transcriber*, who might (as Bishop Hall prettily conjectures), by the mistake of *one letter* only (supposing the word to be contracted), write ירמ for זכר. And though it is certain that Jeremiah was the received reading, as early as Origen's time, yet there is room to doubt whether *any prophet* was named in the *first copies*, as the *Syriack version*, which is allowed to be made in the most early times, says only, *It was spoken by the prophet*, without mentioning by whom. On the whole, I think it more respectful to the *evangelist*,

to

prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value.

(Zech. xi. 13), *saying*, "*And I took the thirty pieces of silver*" (which sum, the reader will observe, was *the* usual *price of one who was sold* for a slave, or of one *whom the children of Israel did sell*, being esteemed among them on an average but the equitable price of such a one; and was here the price of the blood of the Son of God himself, that infinitely valuable Person[e]): SECT. CXCIII. Mat. XXVII. 9

10 And gave them for the potters field, as the Lord appointed me.)

"*And they were given for the potters field, as* (saith the prophet) *the Lord commanded me* in vision, in token of his just displeasure against those who had put such an affront on his pastoral care[f]." 10

MAT. XXVII. 62. Now

But to return *now* to the main story. When, notwithstanding 62

to suppose that some officious *transcriber* might either insert or change *the prophet's name*, than to impute it, as Dr. Mill seems to do, to a slip in the *author's* memory.

[e] *The price of one who was sold*, &c.] We may either render the words, [τὴν τιμὴν τοῦ τετιμημένου, ὃν ἐτιμήσαντο ἀπὸ υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ,] *of one who was sold*, even of one *whom the children of Israel did sell*; and so consider them as expressive of the common price *a slave* was rated at among them: or we may render them, *of him that was sold*, or *valued* (even their own Messiah) *whom the* very *children of Israel sold* at this shameful price. And I think, either of these *versions* would suit the *original*, and convey a lively and proper sense: I have therefore suggested both in the *paraphrase*, though in the *version*, which could not well be equally ambiguous, I have preferred the former.

[f] *And they were given for the potters field, as the Lord commanded me.*] It is plain these words are not exactly quoted, either from the Hebrew or the Septuagint; yet I cannot think the difference so great, as it at first appears; since those words in the *parenthesis* (τὴν τιμὴν τοῦ τετιμημένου, ὃν ἐτιμήσαντο ἀπὸ υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ,) which are not in either, may be considered as the words of the *evangelist* himself (to which he was naturally led by those of the prophet, *A goodly price that I was prized at of them*); and if, which might easily happen, ἔδωκαν be written for ἔδοκα, as ἔλαβον is ambiguous, it may be rendered yet nearer to the *original*, *I took—and gave them*, &c.—As for the general propriety of applying these words to this occasion, I think it may well be vindicated; for the connection and sense of the prophecy in the *Old Testament* seems to be this. In order to represent to Zechariah the contempt which Israel put upon their God, he had a *vision* to the following purpose. He thought God first appointed him to appear among them as a *shepherd*; (making him by that emblem a representation of himself:) after some time, he directs him to go to the rulers of Israel, and ask them, What they thought he deserved for his labour in that office? They give him the price of a slave, *thirty pieces of silver*; and this *in the house of the Lord*, where the court sat. On this, God, as resenting this indignity offered to him in the person of his *prophet*, orders him to *throw* it down with disdain before the first poor labourer he met, who happened to be *a potter* at work by the temple gates, as a fitter price for a little of his paltry ware, than a suitable acknowledgment of the favours they had received from God. Now surely, if there was ever any circumstance in which *the children of Israel* behaved themselves so as to answer this visionary representation, it must be when *they gave* this very sum of *thirty pieces of silver* as *a price* for the life of that very Person whom God had appointed their great *Shepherd*. And, in order to point out the correspondence the more sensibly, Providence so ordered it, that the person to whom this money went should be *a potter*: though the prophecy would have been answered if he had been *a fuller*, or of any other profession. It may also be farther observed, that God's ceasing to be *the Shepherd of Israel*, which was represented by the prophet's *breaking his pastoral staves*, was never fully answered till their *final rejection* after the death of Christ; which may farther lead us to refer the affront of their *giving the pieces of silver* to this event. —I do not remember ever to have seen this matter set in, what seems to me, its just and most natural light; but Grotius has some valuable hints upon it, which I wonder he did not pursue farther.

[t] *After*

SECT. CXCIII.

[1]Mat. XXVII.

Now the next day that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate.

62 notwithstanding the confession of Judas, the Jews had crucified Christ, and his friends had taken down his body from the cross, and laid it in Joseph's tomb on the evening of the sixth day of the week. *On the morrow*, or on the sabbath itself, *which followed the day of preparation, the chief priests, and* other *Pharisees* who belonged to the grand sanhedrim, *assembled together* in a body *to* wait upon *Pilate*, as with an

63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

63 address of solemn importance: *Saying, Sir, we remember that this* notorious *deceiver*, who was yesterday put to death for his crimes, and is well known to have practised many arts to impose upon the people *while he was yet living, said, After three days I will rise again* from the

64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

64 dead[g]: We desire *therefore*, that since his friends have been intrusted with the care of interring him, thou wouldst *order that the sepulchre* where he is laid may *be* strictly guarded and *secured till the third day* is past; *lest his disciples* should *come by night and steal him away, and* upon this should *tell the people* that, according to his own prediction, *he is risen from the dead: and* so *the last deceit will be worse than the first*, and the deluded populace will be more eager to profess their regard to him after his death, than they ever were while he was living.

65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch, go your way, make it as sure as you can.

65 *And Pilate said to them, You have a guard* in waiting about your court in the temple; *go your way* therefore, and order as many of them as you think fit to march to the sepulchre, and to keep centry there all night, and thereby *make* [*it*] *as secure as you* possibly *can.*

66 So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

66 *And* accordingly *they went* and took a detachment of soldiers with them to the garden of Joseph; *and* having first satisfied themselves that the corpse was there[h], they *secured the sepulchre* as well as they possibly could, *sealing the stone*, that it might not be broke open without a discovery of the fraud[i]; *and* also *setting a guard* near

[g] *After three days I will rise again.*] Their intending to *make the sepulchre secure* only *till the third day* ended, shewed that they understood *our Lord's* expression of *rising after three days* to be (as indeed it was) equivalent to a declaration that he would rise *on the third day.* See *note*[f] on Mat. xii. 40. Vol. VI. p. 331. Compare also Deut xiv. 28, with xxvi. 12.

[h] Having first satisfied themselves that the corpse was there.] Common prudence would teach them to do this; and perhaps they might feed their cruelty with viewing the *dead body*, as Herodias did with that sad spectacle *the baptist's head.* See *note*[q] on Mark vi. 28, Vol. VI. p. 408.

[i] *Sealing the stone.*] Some have conjectured they might also cement it with lead, or bind it with iron; but the *sabbath* would hardly have allowed this. The *guard* would prevent

near it, who took care to place themselves so that they could not but take an immediate alarm if any had presumed to make the least attempt to open the sepulchre, and remove the body, or even to embalm it. 66 SECT. CXCIII. Mat. XXVII.

IMPROVEMENT.

IN how fatal a manner does the *way of transgressors* deceive them! *Judas*, no doubt, but a few hours before, was thinking with eager impatience of receiving this sum of *money*, which was the *wages of unrighteousness:* but though he might for a little while *roll it* as a sweet morsel *under his tongue*, yet how soon was it *turned* into *the gall of asps within him?* (Job xx. 12—14.) Mat. XXVII. 3.

We see the *force* of *conscience*, even, in the worst of men. He 5
that had slighted all the warnings that his Master gave him, and neither was affected by the remembrance of his goodness to him, nor by the fear of his displeasure, while he was set upon accomplishing his covetous design, no sooner comes to feel the sting of an awakened *conscience*, but he is filled with horror, and is unable to endure the cutting anguish of his own reflections. And thus could God, in a moment, drive the most hardened sinner into all the agonies of remorse and despair, by letting loose *his own thoughts* upon him, to prey upon his heart like so many hungry *vultures*, and make him a *terror* to others, and an *executioner* to himself.

We must surely admire the wisdom of Providence, in extorting 4
even from the mouth of this *traitor* so honourable a *testimony* of the

prevent *violence;* and the *seal* would be a security against any *fraud* of theirs in confederacy with the *disciples*, if that could possibly have been suspected. I have also hinted in the *paraphrase* above, that this precaution of *sealing the sepulchre* might prevent any attempt, not only to *remove the body*, but to *embalm it*. For it is to be considered, that they had great reason to believe, that when two such eminent persons as Joseph and Nicodemus had already paid such a public honour to the corpse, they would desire also to *embalm it;* which accordingly they did really design. This would be such an additional reflection on the proceedings of the *sanhedrim* as they would certainly desire to prevent. A mandate from Pilate for this purpose they could not be sure of obtaining had they asked it; nor would an act of *their own court* have been free from uncertainty and inconvenience. This method of *sealing the stone* was therefore the most artful expedient that could be imagined; which would effectually prevent it, without letting it be publicly known that they had the least suspicion of any such design. I state the matter thus largely, in regard to one of the most learned persons of the age, who seems to think this a very considerable difficulty.—But with respect to the principal point of his *rising from the dead*, it is surely most senseless to say, with that wretched opposer of the *miracles of Christ*, who has brought upon himself such just infamy, that this *sealing the stone* intimated a *contract* between Christ and *them*, that he should *rise* in the sight of the Jewish rulers *on the third day*. Probably their design was *on the fourth day* to have opened the sepulchre, and have exposed the corpse to public view; which had it been in their power, had been the most prudent step they could have taken. But they do not seem to have been mad enough to think, that if *Jesus rose from the dead*, it must be just when they thought fit to attend.

SECT. CXCIII.

the *innocence* of *Jesus*, though to his own condemnation. And who could have imagined that the *supreme court* of *Israel* itself should have been so little impressed with it, as coldly to answer, *What is that to us? See thou to that.* Is this the language of *rulers*, yea, of *priests?* But they had cast off the *fear* of that *God* whose ministers they were, and had devoted themselves to *gain* and *ambition.* They therefore felt no remorse, even when *Judas* trembled before them, and appeared almost distracted under the sense of a crime in which they had been confederates with him. But their *consciences* were *seared as with a red hot iron*, and all their familiar converse with Divine things served only, in such a circumstance, to harden their hearts: as tempered *steel* gathers strength from the furnace and the hammer.

5 *Judas repents;* he *confesses* his crime; he *throws away* the reward of his guilt: yet was there nothing of *godly sorrow* in all this. Despairing, he becomes *his own executioner;* and flies to *death*, and to *hell*, as a refuge from the rage and fury of an awakened conscience. Fatal expedient! thus to seal his own damnation! But the righteous judgment of God erected him as a monument of wrath, and verified *our Saviour's* declaration, *It had been good for that man if he had never been born.* (Mat. xxvi. 24. and Mark xiv. 21. sect. clxx. p. 287.) Tremble, O our souls, at this thought! that *Judas*, even *one of the twelve*, should fall into such depths of sin and ruin! May we each of us be jealous over ourselves! and may we never presume to censure whole bodies of men for the fault of particular members, when we find there was a *traitor* and *reprobate* among the holy band of the *apostles.*

63, 64. We see the restless and implacable malice of *Christ's enemies*, which pursued him even to his *tomb*, and there endeavoured to blast his memory by fixing upon him the character of an *impostor.*

65, 66 They demanded, and procured *a guard for his sepulchre.* And here also we have a repeated instance of God's *taking the wise in their own craftiness;* (Job v. 13.) The *seal* and the *guard* served only more fully to attest the doctrine of *Christ's resurrection*, which they were set to overthrow, and to grace the triumph they were intended to oppose. Thus shall all the rage, and all the artifice of his enemies, at length promote the purposes of his glory: thus shall *meat* at length *come out of the eater, and sweetness out of the strong;* (Judg. xiv. 14.) *The wrath of man*, O Lord, *shall praise thee; and the remainder of it shall thou restrain*, and shalt triumph over it, either by thy grace, or by thy vengeance; (Psal. lxxvi. 10.

SECT.

SECT. CXCIV.

Christ rising from the dead, the guards flee away in astonishment: Mary Magdalene finding the sepulchre open, calls Peter and John, who having entered into it, return; while Christ himself makes his first appearance to her. Mat. XXVIII. 1—4. Mark XVI. 1, 2—3, 4. Luke XXIV. 1, 2, 12. John XX. 1—17.

MARK XVI. 1.

AND when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and [the other Mary,] *the mother* of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. [MAT. XXVIII. 1.—]

MARK XVI. 1.

AND when the sabbath was over[a], which ended in the evening (as was often observed before) *Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary*, who was [*the mother*] *of James* and Joses, *and Salome*, with Joanna, and some other pious women [b], were so intent on embalming the body of Jesus, that they had another consultation about it; and, not satisfied with the preparation they had made before, they *bought* more *spices* and ointments [c], *that*, after a short repose, as soon as ever they could see to do it, *they might go and anoint him* with them, and pay him all the respect of an honourable interment. SECT. CXCIV. MARK XVI. 1.

2—And very early in the morning, JOHN, when it was yet dark,] as

Now Mary Magdalene, with the other Mary and Salome, were ready before it was day: *and* setting out *very early in the morning* [d] *while it was* 2

a *When the sabbath was over.*] This which Mark expresses by διαγενομενου του σαββατου, Matthew expresses by another phrase, οψε σαββατων, *in the end of the sabbath*, or *when the sabbath* (and consequently the preceding *week*, of which the *sabbath* was the last day,) *was over*; as in *Philostratus*, οψε μυηθηναι is, *when the mysteries were ended*. So that the controversy between *Maius* and *Wolfius*, on this subject, seems needless; as the *criticism* of the former, who supposes these words in Matthew to belong to the close of the *former chapter*, and to refer to the time of *sealing the sepulchre*, is very unnatural; as *Wolfius* has shewn in his learned *note* on Mat. xxviii. 1.

b *Mary Magdalene*, &c. with Joanna, and some other pious women.] In the account the *evangelists* have given of *the women* who first came to the knowledge that Jesus was risen, Mary Magdalene is mentioned by all, *the other Mary* by the three first, and Salome only by Mark: but I have named Joanna here with the rest, as it appears from Luke xxiv. 10. in the *next section*, she was among *the other women* who went to the sepulchre, and was one of those who *told these things to the apostles*.

c They *bought* more *spices*, &c.] Luke had before observed, (chap. xxiii. 56. page 427,) that they *prepared spices and ointments, and* then *rested the sabbath-day according to the commandment*: and Mark here says, that διαγενομενου του σαββατου, *when the sabbath was over*, ηγορασαν they bought [not *they had bought*] *spices, and* then (ver. 2. *very early in the morning*) *came to anoint him*. This I look upon as a strong intimation, that some time *after six in the evening* (on what we call *Saturday night*,) *when the sabbath was over*, as it was then lawful to perform any common work, their generous hearts prompted them to purchase a larger quantity of *aromatic drugs* for this pious purpose.

d Setting out *very early in the morning.*] The learned and ingenious Mr. *West* (of whose accurate *Observations on the Resurrection of Christ* I have given an *extract* at the end of the *preface* to the *third volume* of this work, supposes Mary Magdalene, with *the other* Mary and Salome, to

SECT. CXCIV.

Mark XVI. 2.

was yet dark, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, they went to take a view of the sepulchre [e], to see if all things were as they had left them: and not long after they were followed by Joanna and the rest who were to meet them there, who came at the appointed time, *bringing the spices* with them, *which* (as was said before,) *they had prepared* to embalm the body of Jesus, and which indeed were a considerable weight; *and some* [*others*] of their female friends went also *with them* to assist on this occasion [f].

[as it began to dawn towards the first *day* of the week,] [LUKE, they came to see the sepulchre,] [LUKE, bringing the spices which they had prepared; and certain *others* with them[MAT. XXVIII.—1. LUKE XXIV. 1. JOHN XX. 1.—]

3 *And* as they were advancing towards the sepulchre, they were not under any apprehension from the soldiers that were set to guard it, who had been stationed there without their knowledge on the sabbath-day, (sect. cxciii. p. 432.) but remembering the stone that was placed at the mouth of it, *they said among themselves, Who shall roll away the stone for us from*

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

to have set out to view the sepulchre *before* the time they had agreed to meet Joanna and *the other women* there, who were to *bring the spices*, and to come *about sun-rising* to embalm the body: and as the word πρωι, made use of in this place both by Mark and John (which we have rendered *early*) sometimes signifies *over-early*, or *before the appointed time*, he naturally conjectures it has this signification here, and concludes that *the women* came to the sepulchre *at different times*; the first setting out *before the time agreed on*, just as the day began to break, whereas the others came not thither *till the sun was risen*. (See *West's Observ.* p. 45, 46.)—The difference between this and the scheme here given, chiefly consists in Mr. *West's* supposing *the women* to have made *two different visits* to the sepulchre, and in consequence of that, *two distinct reports* to the disciples, whereas I have united them; though I do not suppose them to have all come together to the sepulchre, but only to have met there. Yet such advantages attend the *scheme* this author has proposed, that if it had been published to the world before I had composed *this Harmony*, I should have chosen to have formed it in a nearer agreement to it, but have now left it to appear with no material alteration in its order.

e *They went to take a view of the sepulchre.*] I have rendered the word ηλθον, *went* (and have likewise explained the word ελθωσαι in the same manner in the *first verse* of this *section*,) which agrees better with the *order* of the story, and is frequently the sense in which *our translators* have rendered it elsewhere. See Mat. xii. 9. xiii. 36. xiv. 12. Mark iii. 19. Luke ii. 44. xiv. 1. John iv. 45. vi. 17. Acts iv. 23. xxviii. 14.—The true import of the word θεωρησαι is to *take a view*; and thus implies their going to see if all things were in the same condition as before, when they had seen the body laid in the sepulchre. (Luke xxiii. 55. p. 426.——I think *Maius* and *Elsner* justly observe, that the xxiii. chapter of Luke should not have ended at the place it does; for here, as in several other places, a sentence is divided: [Το μεν σαββατον ησυχασαι,—τη δε μια των σαββατων—ηλθον, &c.] Such *divisions* are great instances of negligence in the person by whom they were first made; but in a work like this *Harmony*, they are less material, and hardly in some cases avoidable.

f *Some others* of their female friends went also *with them.*] It was indeed a circumstance of *decency*, considering the office they were intending to perform, that the *men* and the *women* should perform their respective parts in it by themselves; which accordingly the *evangelists* plainly intimate they did. Their *setting out alone* was a remarkable instance of their zeal and courage; perhaps some appointment might be made with Peter and John, (who were early up, as it should seem, on this occasion,) either to meet them, or come after them, to assist in *removing the stone*, *though not in embalming the body.*

g They

from the door of the sepulchre, which all of us together have not strength to remove? *For* they had seen Nicodemus and Joseph stop up the entrance with it; and *it was* indeed *very large* and heavy.

SECT. CXCIV.

Mark XVI. 4.

—4 For it was very great.

MAT. XXVIII. 2. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

But this perplexity of theirs was altogether needless; for God had provided a very extraordinary way to remove that obstruction. *And behold*, with due regard and admiration, it was this: *There was*, but a little before they arrived there, *a great earthquake* (which would naturally awaken the guards, if any of them had fallen asleep) and very awful and astonishing were the circumstances that attended it; *for an angel of the Lord descending from heaven, had approached* in sight of the guards, *and rolled away the stone from the door, and sat down upon it.* And, at the very same time, Jesus, like a sleeping conqueror awaking on a sudden, burst asunder the bands of death, and sprung up to a new and immortal life. But none of the guards saw him rise, being struck into the utmost consternation at the sight of the angel, who appeared to remove the stone; *and* well indeed they might be so; for *his countenance was like* the brightness of *lightning, and his* long flowing *garment* was as *white as snow*, glittering with extraordinary lustre beyond what their eyes could bear. *And the guards*, though Romans and soldiers, *trembled for fear* at the sight *of him, and became like* so many *dead men*, falling down on their faces in a most helpless condition. But quickly after, presuming to lift up their eyes, and finding he had disappeared, and had left the sepulchre open, they fled to some distant place, to consult their own safety in so surprising an occurrence [g].

Mat. XXVIII. 2

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.

3

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

4

JOHN XX.—1. And Mary Magdalene seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

John XX.—1.

By this time the women, who had set out as it began to dawn, were near the place; *and Mary Magdalene*, transported with the distinguishing ardour of her affection, advanced a little before the rest; and, it being now light enough to discern objects, she looked forward, and *saw*, to her great surprise, *that the stone was* already *taken away from the sepulchre* [h], and that the

[g] *They fled to some distant place, &c.*] As nothing is said of an interview between them and the friends of Christ, there is great reason to believe that this was the case, as indeed it is on other accounts probable it should be.

[h] *Mary Magdalene saw that the stone was taken away, &c.*] Every attentive reader may

SECT. CXCIV.

Luke XXIV. 2

the tomb was open. *And* she was greatly astonished and alarmed at the sight, and presently concluded that the body was removed. She therefore stepped back, and informed her companions of this circumstance; upon which *they* [*also*] *looked, and* plainly *found* that it was as she represented, and that *the stone* was indeed *rolled away from* the entrance of *the sepulchre*.

LUKE XXIV. 2. And [when they *also* looked,] they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. [MARK. XVI. 4.—]

John XX. 2.

And, not reflecting on the assurance Jesus had given them of his rising again from the dead, they knew not how to account for the removal of the stone; but Mary Magdalene and her companions having consulted a little together, as well as the confusion they were in would admit, it was thought best that some of the disciples, should be immediately acquainted with it: *she therefore runs* back to the city with all possible dispatch [i], *and* knowing where they lodged, she *comes to Simon Peter, and to* John, *that other disciple whom Jesus* peculiarly *loved* (by whom this

JOHN XX. 2. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

may have observed how difficult it is to form the *evangelists* into one coherent story here, and to reconcile some seeming contrarieties in their accounts: nevertheless I hope, on a careful examination of *this* and the *following sections*, it will be found not impracticable. I shall not mention the very different schemes other *critics* have taken, nor the particular objections against them; but would only add a word or two concerning that of Dr. Guyse, which is both new and ingenious, yet not to me satisfactory. He supposes (in his *note* on John xx. 2.) that there were *two appearances* of the *angels* to the *women*; and that Mark and Luke speak only of the *first*, and Matthew and John of the *second*; that is, in other words, (as I understand it.) That as soon as it was light these good *women* came to the sepulchre, and saw an *angel*, who told them, "He *knew they sought Jesus*, but that *he was risen*:" and inviting them "to come and *see the place where he was laid*," charged them "to *go and tell his disciples that he would go before them into Galilee*." Upon this they go immediately and *tell the disciples* (without saying any thing, that we find, of the *vision*") that some unknown person had *taken away the Lord, and laid him they knew not where*;" and then *returning* again to the sepulchre, in less than an hour, they see another, or the same *angel* as before, who, as if it were perfectly unknown by any former declaration, tells them just in the same words, "He *knew they sought Jesus*, but *he was risen*; and, inviting them again to *come and see the place where he had lain*," charges them again, "to *go and tell his disciples that he went before them into Galilee*." This is such a *similarity* of words and actions immediately succeeding each other as I believe can no where be paralleled.—The scheme I offer here (which is that which twice, at the distance of several years, presented itself to me on a view of the *evangelists* alone) is incumbered with no such difficulty, nor indeed with any worth naming, except what arises from the *transposition* of Mark xvi.—2. and Luke xxiv. 12. on which see *note* l in this *section*, and *note* a in the next.

[i] *She therefore runs* back to the city, &c.] It is not expressly said whether the *women* with whom she came thither staid any where near the *sepulchre*, or whether they returned to the city with her; but considering that John, who was an *eye-witness*, has mentioned only Mary Magdalene as *running* with the news, her companions in the mean while might stay at some distance till Peter and John came, and had viewed the *sepulchre*; and might be joined there by *the other women* who were to *bring the spices*, upon whose coming they might go into the sepulchre. (Compare Mark xvi.—2. and Luke xxiv. 3. in the beginning of the *next section*.)—John hints nothing at all of Mary's having *looked into the sepulchre* before she *ran back* to him; and his narration being the last, and most circumstantial, must guide us in adjusting what is ambiguous in the rest.

k *They*

this part of the story is most exactly and circumstantially recorded); *and* finding them already up, and full of solicitude about the event of this important day, she *says to them*, O my friends, the sepulchre is broken open, and some or other must have been there, who have removed the stone; nor is there any room to doubt but *they have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him*[k]; so that I, and my companions, whom I have left behind me, cannot find any method of performing that last office of respect and affection which you know we intended.

SECT. CXCIV.

John XX. 2.

LUKE XXIV. 12. —Then arose Peter [*and* went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.] [JOHN XX. 3.]

And, upon hearing this, without so much as staying to make any reply, *Peter*, whose heart was struck with such a circumstance, *arose* in a transport of various passions[l], *and that other disciple* whom we mentioned before, [*and*] *went* directly *out*, *and* never stopped till they *came to the*

Luke XXIV. 12

[k] *They have taken away the Lord*, &c.] It is difficult to suppose, with Dr. *Clarke*, Dr. *Guyse*, and many other *critics*, that she would have spoken thus if the *angels* had before this expressly assured her of *Christ's resurrection*, and sent her away with such a message as they did to the *disciples*. Compare *note* p on ver 13.

[l] *And Peter arose.*] These words in Luke come in *after* the account given by the *women* to the *eleven*, *and all the rest* of the *disciples* (Luke xxiv. 9), or the *angels appearing to them*, &c. and so make the chief objection against the scheme here offered to the reader: but the word *then*, with which *this verse* is introduced by our *translators*, does not well answer to δε in the *original*; and as we have often shewed before, that Luke is not always so exact in his *order* as not to admit of some *transposition*, so it will run us into greater difficulties not to allow it in the present case, in which it is apparently reasonable to follow John's *order*, who was an *eye-witness*, and who gives the last and largest account. And indeed, if no *transposition* may be allowed, it is absolutely impossible in many passages of the *gospel-history* to make any consistent *harmony* of the evangelists at all; as every attentive reader must have often observed.—This was the view in which I formerly considered the account that Luke has given (ver. 12) of Peter's *visit* to the sepulchre, which I have incorporated here with that of John, who at large relates their going there together, as soon as they received the *first report* from Mary Magdalene of the sepulchre being open, and the body gone: and, as Luke does not mention Peter's *visit* till *after* the report *the women* who had *seen the angels* made to the *disciples*, it could not any way agree with that of John, without allowing the necessity of a *transposition*. But, on considering the *observations* made by Mr. *West*, I am now satisfied that Luke refers not to the *visit* which Peter made with John, but to a *second visit* which he made afterwards upon the *women's* coming with the report that they had seen *two angels* who had assured them Jesus was risen. These women Mr. *West* supposes to have been Joanna and the *other women* who came with the *spices*; upon whose coming to the *disciples* before the arrival of the *two Marys* and *Salome*, and telling them that they had *seen two angels* at the sepulchre, who had informed them Jesus was alive, Peter, willing to see if the angels were there, immediately *arose and ran* again to the sepulchre, and without *entering in* (as he had done before), but only *stooping down* and *looking into it*, as he could see *no angels* there, but *only the linen clothes lying* (for so it is that the words τα οθονια κειμενα μονα should be rendered), came back again in great astonishment. (See *West's Observ.* p. 52, *& seq.*) This I now think to be the best solution of this difficulty, and there is thus no need of any *transposition*; of which I could not but inform the reader, as it is the principal circumstance in which the *scheme* that Mr. *West* has given differs from mine, though I have left the *harmony* to stand as before, that it may still be seen what I had offered, as it will either way be found sufficient to acquit the *evangelists* from any charge of absurdity or contradiction.

[m] *But*

SECT. CXCIV.

John XX. 4.

the sepulchre. And, not contented with the swiftest pace with which they could walk, *they both ran together; and* as *that other disciple* was the younger man, he *out-ran Peter*, who had the start of him at the beginning, *and came first* 5 *to the sepulchre: And stooping down* [*to look into it*], *he saw the linen clothes*, or rollers, in which the corpse had been wrapped up, *lying* there by themselves; *but he did not* at first *enter* 6 *in* to the sepulchre. *Then came Simon Peter*, very quickly *following him, and having stooped down* to look into the sepulchre, as John had done before, he was not satisfied with this; but that he might examine this important affair with such exactness as it deserved, *he went into the sepulchre, and* found the body was gone, but *saw the linen clothes*, with which it had been covered, *laid by themselves*, as John had ob- 7 served from without. *And* he discovered another material circumstance, which had not been remarked before, namely, that *the napkin which was about his head* was *not laid with the linen clothes, but* was *folded up in a place by itself*[m], in such an orderly manner, as plainly shewed that the body was not hastily hurried away, either by friend or enemy; but made the sepulchre appear rather like a bed-chamber, which a person on his awaking in the morning 8 had leisurely quitted. *Then that other disciple who came first to the sepulchre*, and being less adventurous than Peter, stood hitherto without, *went in also* to view it; *and* when *he saw* the several parts of the funeral dress in this situation, he was immediately convinced, *and believed* it now to be at least very probable that 9 his dear Master was indeed revived[n]. *For hitherto they did not know the* full meaning of those

JOHN XX. 4. So they ran both together: and the other disciple did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

5 And he stooping down, *and looking in*, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and [stooping down, he] went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes [laid by themselves;] [LUKE XXIV.—12.]

7 And the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

8 Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that

[m] *But folded up in a place by itself.*] Perhaps *our Lord* himself *folded up the napkin*; and this remarkable circumstance might be intended to signify the perfect *calmness* and *composure* with which he arose, transported with no rapture or surprise at his awaking out of this long sleep.—It would be very impertinent to inquire whence he had *his clothes*; the *angels*, no doubt, furnished him with them; and perhaps the diversity of their colour or form might prevent his being *known* by his friends at first sight.

[n] *He saw and believed.*] Many *interpreters* explain this only of his *believing that the body was not there*; but that he must have *believed before*, on *looking into the sepulchre*: I rather understand it as a modest intimation that *he, first* indeed of all others, *believed the truth of Christ's resurrection*, inferring it, as he reasonably might, from the *order* in which he found the *sepulchre*. These words have a force and a grace, on this interpretation, which I think no other can give them. Much of the beauty of John's manner of writing consists in such hints as these, which shew the temper of that excellent man; and, were he to be considered merely as a *human historian*, add great weight to his testimony. See *note* d on John xxi. 20, sect. cci.

[o] *Went*

that he must rise again from the dead.

those various intimations of *scripture* to which Jesus had so often referred to convince them *that he must* certainly *rise from the dead* (compare Mat. xvi. 21, Vol. VI. p. 465, and Luke xviii. 31—34, Vol. VII. p. 132); which if they had considered they would cheerfully have expected the sure accomplishment of them, and would not have been so much surprised at the news which Mary brought them.

SECT. CXCIV. John XX. 9.

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home, [*Peter* wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.] [LUKE XXIV.—12.]

Then both *the disciples went away again to their companions* in the city[o], [*Peter*] not being so thoroughly satisfied as John was, yet greatly *wondering in himself at what had happened*, and very much concerned as to the event of so surprising a beginning.

10

11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre, weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre,

But Mary, who was now returned, *stood near the sepulchre* after Peter and John were gone from it, not indeed going into it as they had done, but *weeping without*, in great perplexity at her not knowing what was become of Jesus: *and as she wept, she* also *stooped down*, [*and looked*] very wishfully *into the sepulchre:*

11

12 And seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain:

And there she *saw* with great surprise *two angels* in the form of men, clothed *in white* habits, *sitting one at the head, and the other at the feet*, of that niche in the sepulchre *where the body of Jesus had been laid.*

12

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

And they said to her, with a tender regard, *Woman, why dost thou weep* thus? And *she said to them*, Alas, I have reason enough to weep; it is *because they have taken away* the body of Jesus *my* dear *Lord, and I know not where they have laid him*, or how the sacred corpse may be neglected or abused[p].

13

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

And just *as she had said this*, hearing a sudden noise behind her, *she turned back*, before the angels could give her any answer; *and* she *saw Jesus* himself *standing* near her: *and she knew not* at first *that it was Jesus*, his habit being changed

14

[o] *Went away again to their companions.*] So πρὸς ἑαυτούς seems evidently to signify: (compare *Elsner, Observ.* Vol. I. p. 348.) Accordingly soon after this *the women* found *the eleven and the rest* together.) Luke xxiv. 9.)—Ἀπελθεῖν πρὸς ἑαυτὸν never that I know of signifies *to come to one's self*, or to the exercise or possession of one's own mind, as some have strangely interpreted these words. Luke's expression in that case is different; Luke xv. 17, where he says of the *prodigal*, εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἐλθών, *when he came to himself.* It was very prudent in Peter and John to *retire* immediately, lest they should have been questioned by the *rulers*, if found *near the sepulchre.*

[p] *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.*] This expression may very easily be accounted for in our manner of ranging this story; but it is very harsh to suppose she should speak in this manner if one of the *angels* had a few minutes before told her that *Jesus was risen.* She perhaps thought *they came* to do a kind of homage to the place where he had lain, if she apprehended them to be *angels*; which, whether she did or did not, we do not certainly know.

[q] *Supposing*

SECT. CXCIV.

John XX. 14.

changed, her eyes also overflowing with tears, and her mind being so far from any expectation of his appearance, and so much distressed, that she did not so much as look up to the face of the person who appeared.

15 Then *Jesus said to her*, with a gentle voice, *Woman, why dost thou weep* thus? and *whom dost thou seek?* And *she, supposing him to be the gardener*[q], *said to him, Sir, if thou hast* for any unknown reason *borne him* away from *hence*, where the master of the sepulchre saw fit so honourably to lay him but a few hours ago[r], I earnestly beg thou wouldst immediately *tell me where thou hast put him, and I will remove him*, and take effectual care that his corpse shall be decently interred elsewhere, without giving any farther trouble here.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? she, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 *Jesus*, on this, *said to her*, with a loud and distinct voice, in his usual affectionate way, *Mary*, dost thou not know me? [*And*] Mary thereupon turning directly towards him, and eagerly fixing her eyes upon him, immediately discovered who it was; and, transported with a mixture of unutterable passions, *she said to him, Rabboni; that is to say*, [*My great*] *Master* and Teacher! and so much was her heart affected, that she could say no more, but immediately prostrated herself at his feet to embrace them.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master.

17 But *Jesus said to her, Do not* stay here to *embrace me* [*now*], either to pay thine homage to me, or to confirm thy faith; both which thou wilt have other opportunities of doing: *for I am not*

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended

[q] *Supposing him to be the gardener.*] It is very probable that Jesus might speak low, or in a different way from what he usually did: and her taking him for *the gardener* seems to indicate there was nothing very splendid in his dress: accordingly when *he appeared* to the *two disciples* in their way to Emmaus, they seem to have taken him for a person of *a rank* not much superior to their own. Her eyes might also be *withheld* at first from knowing Jesus by some supernatural restraint, as theirs were. Luke xxiv. 16.

[r] *Sir, if thou hast borne him hence.*] It is observable that she accosts this stranger in respectful language, even when she took him for *a servant* (for κυριε, I think, signify *the owner of the garden*; prudently reflecting that an error on that hand would be more excusable than on the other, supposing he should have proved one of superior rank in a plain dress: and also that she does not name Jesus, but speaks in indefinite terms, *if thou hast borne him hence*; intimating that he was the *one person* of whom her own thoughts and heart were so full, that she took it for granted every one must know who she meant. Such language in such a circumstance was perfectly natural.—If there was any hedge or arbour *near the sepulchre*, so that while she spake to Jesus she was not visible to *her companions*, or if this avenue was such that, while they came up to it, *the sepulchre* was between her and them; or if they were now waiting at some distance, or coming up with a slower pace, being charged with the weight of the materials for embalming (any one of which might very possibly be the case); a difficulty with respect to the time of their coming to the sepulchre, which may occur itself to the sagacious reader, in the disposition of the *following section*, when compared with *this*, will disappear at once.

s *Do*

ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and *to* my God and your God.

not yet withdrawn from your world, and *ascended* *to* the heavenly court of *my Father*, as you may imagine I should presently do[s]; but I shall yet continue for a little while upon earth, and give you further opportunities of seeing me again: let nothing therefore now detain thee any longer, *but go* immediately *to my* dear *brethren*, for whom I have still the same affectionate regard as ever, *and say unto them, I* am risen from the dead, and after I have paid some visits to you, am shortly indeed to *ascend* into heaven, from whence I came: yet grieve not at that separation, but remember, that as I am going *to* him who is in a very peculiar sense *my Father*, so I shall still be mindful of your interest, *and* am also going to *your Father, and* [*to*] *my God and your God*; for such he is now become, through that covenant which he has established with you in me[t]: on the whole, therefore, you have infinitely greater reason to rejoice than to mourn. And

sect. cxciv.

John xx. 17.

[s] *Do not embrace me* now, *for I am not yet ascended to my Father.*] Mr. *Chandler*, in his *Answer* to the *Considerations* on the *Trial of the Witnesses*, has given such convincing reasons in the present case for rendering the word ἅπτω, *embrace* (which I before apprehended to be the sense of it), that I think myself warranted in changing the *version*. We find indeed in the *next section*, that presently after this, when Jesus appeared to *the women* who were *fleeing from the sepulchre*, they were permitted to *embrace him*: (compare Mat. xxviii. 8, 9, and Mark xvi. 8. But this is well accounted for by Mr. *West*, as graciously designed to calm their minds, and to remove the *terror* they were under; while Mary, who was under no such terror, had her *grief* dispersed at once, and was immediately convinced that it was Christ upon his calling her by her name. And, to induce her not to wait for any thing more at present, it was a very proper consideration that *our Lord* subjoins, *For I am not yet ascended to my Father*; in which he at once assured her that he was not yet quitting this world, and plainly intimated his intention of seeing her and his disciples again, and paying frequent visits to them before his final departure, when what he had lately said to his disciples, of his *going to the Father* (John xvi. 28), should be fulfilled by his *ascension* into heaven. (See *West's Observ.* p. 167, *& seq.*)—The sense is obvious and easy in this view, and Dr. *Whitby* (in his *Note* on this place), Mr. *Fleming* (*Christol.* Vol. III. p. 502), Mr. *Cradock*, and others, interpret these words as I have done in the *paraphrase*; and it is strange that Mr. Whiston should think *this text* inexplicable, unless we suppose "that Christ was *immediately* to *ascend to his Father*, before he could at all converse with any of them, or receive the expressions of their homage to him." (See the *Appendix* to his *Sermons* at *Boyle's Lect.* p. 298—300.) If there had been any necessity for his *ascending immediately*, he surely would not *first* have *appeared to Mary*, and then to the *other women* on their way to the city. The interpretation here given suits *the words* as well, and other *scriptures* much better. She probably thought that if *he was risen* he was also returned back to his *heavenly Father*, to keep up his stated abode with him again, as he quickly after did: to assure her therefore of the contrary was exceeding proper, and the best reason that could be given to persuade her to wave any farther discourse now, with which to be sure she must otherwise have been earnestly desirous to detain her dear Lord.—To suppose, with Messrs. *L'Enfant* and *Beausobre*, that she meant this adoration as *homage* to *a temporal prince*, and that *our Lord's answer* was chiefly intended as a declaration that must *ascend to his Father before he received his kingdom*, appears to me very unnatural.

[t] *Go to my brethren*, &c.] By calling the disciples *his brethren* and God *their Father and their God*, he intimates in the strongest manner the full *forgiveness of their fault* in leaving him, even without ever mentioning it; just as *the Father* of the *prodigal*

SECT. CXCIV. And upon saying this he immediately disappeared for the present; and the other women, advancing to the sepulchre, where the angels continued, received the news of his resurrection from them, and were directed, as Mary Magdalene also was, to report it to the disciples, with a variety of additional circumstances, which will be mentioned in the following section.

IMPROVEMENT.

Mat. xxviii. 1—4 How fit is it that we should *sing unto the Lord a new song!* and with what thankful hearts should we join, on *his own day*, and on every day, to congratulate the triumph of his *rising from the dead*, and to rejoice in this *birth-day* of our hopes! Now is the *justice of God* amply *satisfied*, or the prisoner had never been released. Now is the *reproach of the cross ceased*, and turned into proportionable glory. *That reproach was rolled away* at once by the *descending angel*, who *appeared*, not to awaken *Christ* from his sleep, or to bring him *a new life*, for he had himself *a power*, whenever he pleased, to resume that which he had voluntarily resigned (John x. 18); but he came to add a solemn pomp to his revival, and to strike *the guards* with such a *terror* as would effectually prevent any mad attempt on this glorious *Conqueror*, when he was bursting the bonds in which he had for a while been held.

O Lord, we acknowledge the truth of thy promise: *thou didst not leave* his *soul in hell, neither didst thou suffer* the flesh of *thine Holy one to see corruption* (Psal. xvi. 10.) *Now is Christ* indeed *risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept* (1 Cor. xv. 20): may we, in conformity to his holy example, be *dead to sin*, and *to the world; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also* may *walk in newness of life!* (Rom. vi. 4.) Then will *he that raised up Christ from the dead*, ere long, *quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in us.* (Rom. viii. 11.)

John xx. 13—17 Let the faith of what has been done with regard to our glorified *Head*, and shall at length be accomplished with respect to all his *members*, daily gladden our hearts. When our eyes are *weeping*, and our souls sinking within us, let us raise our thoughts to *Jesus*, our *risen*, and now *ascended Redeemer*; who says to all *his brethren*

digal (Luke xv. 26, *& seq.*) intimated *his forgiveness* of his undutiful behaviour, by *calling for the best robe*, &c. without any direct reply to what his *penitent child* had said of his *unworthiness to be called his son.*— These exquisite touches, which every where abound in the *evangelical writings*, give inexpressible delight to a well-turned heart, and shew how perfectly *Christ knew our frame.*

brethren these gracious words (which may justly be received with transports of astonishment, and fill our hearts at the same time *with joy unspeakable, and full of glory*), "*I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.*" SECT. CXCIV. John XX. 17.

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is now, through the death and resurrection of his dear Son (whom *by raising him from the dead* he has so solemnly owned under that relation), become *our Father* and *our God*. As such let us honour him, love him, and rejoice in him: and when we must leave this world, which *Christ* has long since left, let it delight our souls to think that we shall likewise ascend after him, and dwell *with him* in his propitious Divine presence. In the mean time, *if we are risen with Christ*, let us *seek those things which are above, where Christ* now *sitteth at the right-hand of God* (Col. iii. 1.); and let us be willing, in whatever sense God shall appoint, to be *made conformable to his death*, that we may also be *partakers of his resurrection* and glory. (Phil. iii. 10, 11.)

SECT. CXCV.

Christ having appeared to Mary, the other women come to the sepulchre, and are informed of his resurrection by the angels. He appears to the women as they return to the city; but neither their testimony, nor that of Mary, is received by the disciples. Mat. XXVIII. 5—10. Mark XVI.—2, 5—11. Luke XXIV. 3—11. John XX. 18.

MARK XVI. 9.

NOW when *Jesus* was risen early, the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

MARK XVI. 9.

WE have just *now* seen in the preceding section, that *when* [*Jesus*] *was risen* from the dead, very *early on the first day of the week* (which day was afterwards observed by his followers in commemoration of this important fact), *he made his first appearance to Mary Magdalene, out of whom* (as was formerly said) *he had* some time before *ejected* no less than *seven dæmons*, who by an awful providence were permitted to join together in afflicting her. (Compare Luke viii. 2, Vol. VI. p. 319.) SECT. CXCV. Mark XVI. 9.

—2 And they [*i. e. the other women*] came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

But it is now time to return to the women, her companions, from whom she had parted when she went to inform Peter and John that the sepulchre was open (John xx. 2, p. 436). These were now joined by [*the other women*] who had brought the spices, and, while Mary was engaged in this interview with Christ, *came* up together *to the sepulchre:* and it was now —2

SECT. CXCV.

Luke XXIV. 3

about the time of *the rising of the sun*[a]. *And having* found the passage open without any obstruction in the way, and observed as they stood at a distance that Peter and John had done the like, they *entered into the sepulchre* themselves; but, as they had before suspected on seeing it open, *they found not the body of the Lord Jesus.*

4 *And it came to pass*, that *as they were in great perplexity on this account*, and knew not what to think was become of the body, *behold*, to their inexpressible astonishment, *they saw* the *two* angels whom Mary had seen but a little before (who had disappeared upon their coming to the sepulchre, but now rendered themselves visible at once), in the form of *men*, arrayed *in splendid habits*, [*who*] came and *stood by them*, the women being unable to discover how they came in: and [*one of them*] appeared like *a young man*, with a beautiful and cheerful aspect, *clothed in a long white robe*, glittering with lustre like the purest snow: and this was the angel who appeared at first to the guards, and *who had been* afterwards seen by Mary, *sitting on the right side* 5 of the entrance into the sepulchre. *And they were* greatly *terrified* at this extraordinary and surprising sight; *and*, stepping back to the very door[b], they *bowed their faces to the ground*, and fixed their eyes upon it, in token of the profoundest respect[c].

Mat. XXVIII. 5

But the angel, in a most mild and condescending manner, *answered and said unto the women*[d], *Do not be terrified* at what you see; *for* we appear to comfort rather than afflict you, and have the

LUKE XXIV. 3. And they entered [into the sepulchre], and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. [MARK XVI. 5.—]

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold [they saw] two men [*who*] stood by them in shining garments; [*one of them* a young man, *who had been* sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment.] [MARK XVI.—5.—]

5—And [they were affrighted], and bowed down *their* faces to the earth. [MARK XVI.—5.]

MAT. XXVIII. 5. And the angel answered and said unto the women, [Be not affrighted:] for I know that

[a] *About the rising of the sun.*] We have seen before, that Mary Magdalene, with *the other Mary* and Salome, set out *while it was yet dark*, and came within sight of the *sepulchre* for the first time, just as it grew light enough to discern that it was opened (compare Mat. xxviii. 1, and John xxi. 1, p. 435); but by that time Mary had called Peter and John, and *they* had viewed the *sepulchre*, and Joanna was come with *the other women* who were to *bring the spices*, which might all pass in less than an hour, *the sun was up*. These circumstances well agree with each other, and are presumptions in favour of the *order* which we have laid down.

[b] Stepping back to the very door.] This it was natural for them to do; and from the *angel's* afterwards inviting them to *come in and view the sepulchre*, we may infer that they were now precisely in this attitude.

[c] *They bowed their faces to the ground*, and fixed their eyes upon it, &c.] The words ηλιωσων το προσωπον εις την γην, do not intimate their *prostrating themselves* before the *angels*, but a respectful and reverential *declining their heads*, and looking downward, that they might not appear to *gaze*; which is well known to have been forbidden to the Jews upon the sight of a celestial vision: (see Exod. xix. 21; and compare Judg. xiii. 20.) And it was also considered as dangerous by the *heathen*, when their *deities*, or any celestial messengers from them, were supposed to make themselves visible; as *Elsner* has finely shewn in his learned and entertaining *Note* here. *Elsn. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 284.

[d] *But the angel answered*, &c.] I entirely agree with Mr. *West*, that the *particle* δε should here be rendered *But*. See *West's Observ.* p. 23.

[e] *Re-*

that ye seek Jesus [of Nazareth,] which was crucified: [LUKE, Why seek ye the living among the dead?] MARK XVI. 6.--LUKE XXIV. —5.]

the best tidings to bring you that ever you heard: SECT. CXCV.
I know, that in the strength of your affection *you* are come to *seek* that holy and excellent Person, Mat. XXXVIII
Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified the other 5
day, and buried here: but *why seek ye the living among the dead?* and why are you come hither with materials for embalming one who is possessed of an immortal life? *He is not here,* Luke XXIV.
but is risen this morning, *as he said* that he 6
should: *behold*, the tomb *where they laid him;* the body is not here: *come* in, and satisfy yourselves by the strictest inquiry; and *view*, with all the mixture of holy affections which are suitable to such a circumstance, *the place where the Lord* of life and glory, the Prince of angels and men, *lay* for a while a breathless corpse: but he has now triumphed over the grave; and you have no reason to be surprised to hear it; for it not only was most probable in itself that this would be the case, but he also often foretold it. *Remember* particularly *how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee* with you, where I know with what kindness you attended and ministered to him[e]; Recollect that remark- 7
able *saying* of his which was so often repeated, *The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinners, and be crucified, and the third day* he shall *rise again* (see Mat. xvi. 31, Vol. VI. p. 465; xvii. 22, 23, Vol. VI. p. 483. and xx. 18, 19, p. 132): now this, as you well know, is the third day; and what he said is most exactly verified. (*And*, while the angel spake thus, 8
they called to mind what they had heard from Jesus, and perfectly *remembered his words.* *But go quickly*, added he, and communicate to Mat. XXVIII
your friends the joy which you now feel; yea, 7
go *and tell his* mourning *disciples, and* particularly tell *Peter*, who is so overwhelmed with his peculiar sorrows, *that he is risen from the dead: and* acquaint them also, in further confirmation of the truth of it, *Behold, he is* shortly *going before you into Galilee*[f]; for I am commissioned to assure

LUKE XXIV. 6. He is not here, but is risen, [as he said;] [MARK, behold where they laid him:] [come see the place where the Lord lay:] remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, [MAT. XXVIII. 6. MARK XVI.—6.]

7 Saying, the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8 And they remembered his words.

MAT. XXVIII. 7. [But] go [your way] quickly, and tell his disciples [and Peter] that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into

e *Remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee.*] This familiar manner in which the angel speaks of what passed between Jesus and them in Galilee, seems to intimate, that he had then been present, though invisible, and heard what Jesus said. The hint suggests many agreeable reflections, which the pious reader will dwell upon at leisure.—The mention which he afterwards makes of Peter, whether it were or were not by a particular charge from Christ, is also observable in the same view.

f *He is going before you into Galilee.*] When we consider this expression of the *angel* to the *women*, as Mark has related it

[ειπατε—

SECT. CXCV. assure you, that *there shall ye* all *see him, as he said to you* that he would meet you there: (compare Mat. xxvi. 32. and Mark xiv. 28. p. 343.)

into Galilee, there shall ye see him, [as he said unto you:] Lo, I have told you. [MARK XVI. 7.]

Mat. XXVIII 7 *Lo, I*, who am one of the angels that stand in the presence of God, *have told you* this, and my associate is here ready to attest it; and therefore, important and wonderful as the message is, you need not at all scruple to report it.

Mark XVI. 8 *And* upon this, instead of making any farther scrutiny, *they went out quickly*[g], *and fled from the sepulchre* as fast as possible; *for they trembled, and were amazed* at this angelic vision: *and*, whoever they met by the way, *they said nothing to any one* of them, *for they were* very much *affrighted*; [*but*] *with* hearts full of *fear* at what they had seen, *and* with a mixture also of *great joy* at this happy news which they had received in so awful a manner[h], *they ran* with all the speed they could *to bring his disciples word.*

MARK XVI. 8. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled, and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man, for they were afraid; [and with fear and great joy did run to bring his disciples word.] MAT. XXVIII. 8.]

Mat. XXVIII 9 *And as they were going* on their way *to tell his disciples*[i], *behold, Jesus* himself *met them,*

MAT. XXVIII. 9. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold,

[ιπταλι—οτι ηγερθη απο, &c.] the construction shews, as the learned *Bos* observes (*Exercit.* p. 23), that these words are the *message* which the *angel* puts into the mouth of these *women*, to be delivered by them to the *apostles*. But what is added [*there shall ye see him*] may, consistent with this criticism, be understood as in the *paraphrase*, which makes the sense more complete, by adding a very material, and, to them who so tenderly loved Jesus, a very delightful circumstance; namely, that they should *see him themselves*, and not merely receive the most credible assurances of his resurrection from others.

g *They went out quickly.*] This is the exact import of the word εξελθουσαι, which is the same in both the *evangelists*, but is improperly rendered here in Matthew, *they departed*. (See *West's Observ.* p. 36.)

h *With fear and joy*] It was so natural for such a *mixture* of *passions* to arise on this grand occasion, that I think very little stress is to be laid on Mark's mentioning their *fear* alone, and Matthew's mentioning their *joy* with it, to prove they relate *different stories*.—I have since the pleasure to find, that this is represented in the same light by Mr. *West*, who has clearly shewn that both these sacred writers speak of the *same fact*. (See *West's Observ.* p. 27—40.

i *And as they were going* on their way *to tell his disciples.*] Admitting what is here supposed, that there was but *one vision* of *angels* (besides that to Mary Magdalene), and *one message* sent by them, this will I think establish the *order* in which we have ranged this story. For if (as Dr. *Clarke* and many other *critics* strangely suppose) Mary's interview with the *apostles* (John xx. 2.) had happened between the *angelic vision* and this *appearance of Christ* to the *women*, such a connection as this would have been very unnatural. Matthew would on that *hypothesis* rather have said, *And when they had told his disciples* [*and they believed them not*], *Jesus met them*, &c.—But Mr. *West* who apprehends that there were several distinct appearances of *angels*, and two distinct appearances of Christ to the *women* (the first to Mary Magdalene, and the second to *the other Mary* and Salome, when the *other women* were not present), concludes, that these several facts were reported to the *apostles* at different times, and by different women; and that Joanna and the *other women*, who had only *seen the angels* after the *two Maries* and *Salome* were gone from the sepulchre, made their report to the *apostles* before the arrival of the *two Maries* and *Salome*; and by thus representing the story in a *different order* he obviates the difficulty arising from the account which the *two disciples* that were going to Emmaus give of the *report* they had heard from the women. Luke xxiv. 22—24. (See *West's Observ.* p. 77, 86, *& seq.*)

k *Jesus*

SECT. CXCV.

Mat. XXVIII. 9

hold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came, and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

them[k], *saying*, in the usual form of congratulatory salutations, *Hail*, my friends! I give you joy of the day. *And* upon this, beginning to recover from their fear, as they saw it was Jesus, *they drew near* in the most respectful manner, *and*, prostrating themselves before him, *took hold of his feet*, and embraced them, *and payed their homage to him* on this joyful occasion.

10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren, that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

10 *Then Jesus*, as he saw that they were still in a great deal of confusion, did not long permit them to continue in that posture, but comforted and dismissed them (as he had done before with respect to Mary.); and *said to them*, *Be not* any more *afraid*, for you have indeed no reason for it; [*but*] as you have now the fullest proof that I am actually risen from the dead, *go* ye therefore and *tell my* dear *brethren*, whoever of them you may meet here in the city[l], *that they go away into Galilee*, to the place I formerly appointed (see note[b] on Mat. xxvi. 32, p. 343); *and* when a proper number of them is met *there*, *they shall see me appear* publicly among them, to remove all the remaining doubts which any of them may entertain as to the certainty of my resurrection.

Luke XXIV. 9. And [they] returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

Luke XXIV. 9

Now after Jesus had spoken these words, he immediately disappeared; and the women ran on to carry the news: *and when they were returned from the sepulchre* to Jerusalem, *they told all these things to the eleven* apostles, *and to all the rest* of the disciples, whom they met with then, or on the following days[m], having it much

[k] *Jesus* himself *met them.*] I cannot think, with Dr. *Lightfoot (Hor. Heb. in loc.)* that this relates to his interview with Mary Magdalene described before; for though an *enallage* or *exchange of numbers* be sometimes used (see *note*[h] on Luke xxiii. 39, p. 409), yet it is not to be admitted without necessity. Now it is certain Mary was alone when Christ appeared to her; and *that appearance* was *at the sepulchre*, *this* between that and the city, and probably after they dispatched some considerable part of the way in their flight. The words [*as they went to tell his disciples*] are indeed wanting in many ancient *versions* and *manuscripts*, as Dr. *Mill* has shewn in his *Note* on this place; but Dr. *Whitby*, with considerable reason, contends that they are genuine (see his *Examen. Millii*, p. 91); and the sense of them seems implied in the close of the preceding *verse*.

[l] *My brethren.*] The reader will observe *our Lord* speaks the same language here which he had used John xx. 17. (See *note*[t] on that text, p. 443.) No doubt these affectionate friends of Christ were exact in reporting this circumstance, that their injured Lord called them *his brethren* still. And both Matthew and John, to whom the glad tidings were immediately brought, felt it strike so powerfully on their hearts, that they could not but record it.

[m] *And to all the rest.*] This I think refers not only to *one report*, but to the *repetition* of the testimony to any of their pious friends who believed in Jesus: and if *that* be admitted, it will be an additional proof that what is said in ver. 12 should be *transposed* in such a manner as is necessary for reconciling it with the scheme we have proposed in the preceding *section*. Compare *note*[l] on Luke xxiv. 12, p. 449.

SECT. CXCV. much at heart to deliver this important message in the most punctual and effectual manner.

Luke XXIV. 10 *And they were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary* [*the mother*] *of James* and Joses, and Salome, *and the other women* that had gone *with them* to the sepulchre, as above, with an intent to embalm Christ's body (p. 435), *who* were the persons that were thus honoured with this message from the angels, and from Christ himself; and who accordingly came and *told these things to the apostles*, who had none of them as yet seen any thing more themselves than that the sepulchre was empty, and the linen clothes laid in order. *And Mary Magdalene* in particular *went* with the other women, *and told the disciples that had been* so constantly *with him, as they were mourning and weeping* for the loss of their dear Master, *that she* also *had seen the Lord; and that* indeed *he* had appeared to her the first of all the company, and *had spoken these* gracious *things unto her* as well as to them relating to his resurrection from the dead, and had expressly ordered her to acquaint them with his purpose of ascending ere long to his Father and their Father, and to his God and their God. (Compare John xx. 17, p. 442.)

10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were* with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

Mark XVI. 10. MARK XVI. 10. *And* [Mary Magdalene] went and told [the disciples] that had been with him, as they mourned and wept, [that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.] [JOHN XX. 18.]

11 But such were the prevailing prejudices that had possessed the minds of the disciples, and so entirely were their spirits dejected, and their hopes blasted by the death of their Lord, that though they could not think this was related with a design to impose upon them, yet they were ready to impute it to the power of imagination; *and* even *when they heard that he was* actually *alive, and had been seen by her*, and by the other women who also testified the same, *they did not* in general *believe* it; *but their words seemed to* most of *them as an idle tale*, and they determined to suspend their belief of so important a fact till they were satisfied of it by the testimony of their own senses; which, through the great condescension of their Lord, several of them were before the end of that day, as we shall quickly relate.

11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not: [and their words seemed to them as idle tales.] [LUKE XXIV. 11.]

IMPROVEMENT.

Mat. xxviii. 6 WE are now again called, as by the *angel's* voice, *to come and see the place where the Lord lay*, and to take an affectionate survey

vey of that *sepulchre*, which *our rising Saviour* had left, and where he had laid aside the *dress of death*, as a token that he should return to it no more. How wonderful that he should ever have *lain there!* that the *Lord of life* should have dwelt among the *dead*, and from the glory of the *throne* of God should have sunk down to the abasement of the *grave!*—But he has burst its prison doors, and has *abolished death, and him who had the power of it*; abolished it for himself and us. How are all its terrors now disarmed! *O death, where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory!* (1 Cor. xv. 55.) SECT. CXCV. Mat. XXVIII. 6.

With what pleasure did the *angels* deliver this gracious message of *their Lord* as well as *ours!* and with what transport did the pious *women* receive it! Behold the tender care of *Christ* over his people! *Angels* have it immediately in charge to send the glad tidings to *his disciples*; and *Jesus* repeats and confirms them. *Go tell my brethren*, I am risen from the dead. *Lord!* Is this thy language concerning those who but a few hours before had *forsaken thee!* and one of them, with such dreadful imprecations, *denied thee!* Yet even *that disciple* is not excluded; nay, to *him* is it peculiarly addressed: *go tell my brethren*, and in particular tell *Peter*, that he, poor mourner, may especially be comforted. *Compassionate Redeemer!* thou hast brought up from the tomb with thee that tenderness and goodness which laid thee there! 7, 8, 10, Mark xvi. 7.

Such is the freedom and glory of thy grace, that thou sometimes dost *first manifest thyself* to those who were once in the most miserable bondage to *Satan*. Whenever this is the case, may the peculiar obligation be remembered! May every remainder of *unbelief* be subdued in our souls! and may we joyfully *communicate* to all around us the tidings of a *risen Saviour*, and the merciful discoveries of his presence to us! 9, 10

SECT. CXCVI.

The guards, returning to Jerusalem, make their report to the chief priests; and are bribed to say that the disciples stole the body of Christ while they slept. Christ appears to Peter, and then to two other disciples. Mat. XXVIII. 11—15. Mark XVI. 12, 13.

MAT. XXVIII. 11.

NOW when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

MAT. XXVIII. 11.

NOW while these extraordinary things were transacting, and *the* [*women*] *were going* to tell the disciples, what they had heard and seen *behold, some of the guards*, who had fled from the sepulchre in great consternation, began a little to recollect themselves, as to the excuse they should make for its being broke open, and the body being gone, as it would soon be known SECT. CXCVI. Mat. XXVIII. 11

SECT. CXCVI. Mat. XXVIII.

that it was: they *came* therefore *into the city, and told the chief priests*, from whom they had received their immediate charge, *all that had happened*; and urged how impossible it was for 11 them to make any opposition in the presence of the angel, who shook the very earth with the terror of his appearance, and therefore might be easily supposed to take away all power of resistance from them. And thus these ignorant and stupid heathens became in effect the first preachers of Christ's resurrection, and were witnesses of the truth of it to the most inveterate of his enemies [a].

12 This report could not but strike the chief priests into some amazement and confusion: and therefore they immediately convened the sanhedrim; *and having met together with the elders* of the people, they deliberated upon it, *and consulted* among themselves what they should do in so perplexing an emergency; and particularly whether they should dismiss the guards with a charge to conceal the story they had told them, or should accuse them to the governor, and attempt to punish them for neglecting their duty: but, considering the manner in which the governor had appeared affected towards Jesus, and the many prodigies which had attended his death, by which Pilate's conscience must have been in some degree awakened; and also knowing they had no positive proof of any negligence or treachery in the soldiers, *they* resolved to commence no prosecution against them, and to pass it over without any complaint; but, apprehending that the most effectual method they could take would be to endeavour to pervert their evidence, they *gave a large* [*sum of*] 13 *money to the soldiers* [b]. *Saying*, Since this strange

12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers.

13 Saying, Say ye, his

a These ignorant and stupid heathens became in effect the first preachers, &c.] Such news, coming from such persons, must undoubtedly throw the *priests* into inexpressible confusion; but it is remarkable, that neither the *soldiers* nor the *priests* were converted by what the one saw or the other heard. Perhaps the *soldiers* might think that Jesus was, like some of their fabulous *heroes*, the *son* of some *deity*, who brought him to life again; but, instead of imagining themselves concerned in the purposes of his *resurrection*, they might perhaps abuse their knowledge of it, to confirm their belief of some superstitious tales of their own *priests*, which bore some little resemblance to it; as those of Alcestis, Hippolytus, Hercules, and many others did. See *Valer. Max.* lib. i. cap. viii. § 12. and *Plin. Nat. Hist.* lib. vii. cap. 52.

b *They gave a large* sum of *money to the soldiers.*] Mr. *Ditton* very well observes (in his unanswerable *Demonstration of Christ's Resurrection*, p. 296.) that had they not been afraid to put them to death, as they were Romans, it is very probable that Caiaphas's maxim, (John xi. 50.) That *it was better one man should die than all the people perish*, would have cost some of them their lives; at least the *commanding officer*, had he

his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

strange thing has happened, whether there really was any sorcery in it, or whether it was merely your dream[c], it must for the public safety be concealed, or the whole nation will be deluded and undone: we must therefore insist upon it, that neither you, nor your companions, say any thing of what you imagine you saw; but if any should question you about it, and pretend that this Jesus is risen, *say ye* only in the general, We were weary with so long a watch, and dropped asleep; and we conclude, *that his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept*[d]. *And* you have no need to be afraid of being punished for your negligence; for *if this should* come to *be heard by the governor*, and he should blame you for sleeping on your guard, *we will persuade him* to make no farther inquiry about it, *and* by our interest with him will *make you* easy and *secure.*

SECT. CXCVI.

Mat. XXVIII 13

14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

14

15 So they took the money and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

15 *And they took the money* that was offered them, *and did as they were taught;* and, according to their instructions, they concealed what they had seen, and pretended that some of the disciples must have taken the advantage of their weariness and neglect, and so have carried off the body while they were fallen asleep. *And* such are the prejudices of that unhappy people, that *this story*, wild and senseless as it was, *is commonly reported among the Jews even to this day*[e]: and

he been fully in their power, would have been in imminent danger. Could they have proved any *neglect*, no doubt these *soldiers* would have been prosecuted to the utmost (as *Peter's guards* were afterwards, Acts xii. 19.) But, as they were destitute of all proof, it was prudence not to prosecute them at all; for, had Pilate acquitted them, it would have been in effect a public declaration, that he was convinced Jesus was indeed *risen.*

c Whether there really was any sorcery in it, &c.] They must, to be sure, be puzzled to account for this strange event: and, laying it down as a first principle, "that Jesus must be an *impostor*" they would, of course, incline to impute *his resurrection*, as they had ascribed *his miracles* to some *diabolical operation.* It is however probable, that such artful men might speak of it in such loose terms as the *paraphrase* represents, though they could not seriously endeavour to persuade the *guards* they were in a *dream.*

d *And stole him away while we slept.*] It was ridiculous to pretend to say with any certainty what passed *while they were asleep*; so that this was in effect only hiring them to say, that *they knew nothing of the matter*, and did not observe any thing more than ordinary had passed that night. How absurd this pretence was, a thousand circumstances concur to shew; as most *writers in defence of Christianity* have demonstrated, and perhaps none, in few words, better than Bishop *Burnet on the Articles*, p. 64.

e *Reported among the Jews even to this day.*] This seems to intimate, that Matthew wrote *his gospel* several years after *our Lord's resurrection.*—As to the industry of the Jews in propagating *this report*, it is very observable that *Justin Martyr*, (*Dialog. cum. Tryph.* p. 368. *Edit. Thirlb.*) expressly asserts, "that the Jews sent chosen men of considerable rank over all the world, not only in the general to represent Christianity as an *impious sect*, but to assert that the *body of Jesus* was *stolen* out of his tomb by night, and that the persons who thus fraudently conveyed him away, took occasion from thence to report that he *rose from the dead*, and ascend-

SECT. CXCVI. and they still choose, in opposition to the most certain evidence, to believe this extravagant suggestion, rather than yield to the truth of Christ's resurrection, though solemnly attested to them, by many who saw and conversed familiarly with him after he was risen from the dead; of which number "Peter was one, who was early distinguished by the favour of seeing him, and to whom indeed he appeared first of all the apostles [f]." (See 1 Cor. xv. 5.)

Mat. XXVIII 15

Mark XVI. 12. Now this account that Jesus was risen, was brought to the disciples by the women soon after his resurrection, on the first day of the week; *and after this*, on the same day, *he appeared to two of them*, though *in another form*, or in a different habit from what he ordinarily wore [g], *as they were walking* on the way, *and going into the country* to Emmaus, a neighbouring village [h]. *And*

MARK XVI. 12. After that, he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

ed into heaven." And this message is spoken of, as having been sent *before the destruction of Jerusalem*. Compare *note* a on Acts xxviii. 22. Vol. VIII. sect. lx.

f Peter was one,——to whom he appeared first of all the apostles.] Though the evangelists have not recorded the particular circumstances of *our Lord's appearance to Peter*, yet it is evident that he appeared *first to Peter*, before he was seen by the rest of the apostles. (Compare 1 Cor. xv. 5. and Luke xxiv. 34.) Dr. Lightfoot therefore supposes, that Peter was one of the *two disciples* to whom *Christ appeared* as they were going to Emmaus; and imagines, he was so earnestly desirous to obtain a sight of Christ, that upon hearing from the women, (Mat. xxviii. 7, 8.) that he would *go before them into Galilee, where they should see him*, he presently set out with Cleopas for Galilee; but, having seen him in their way to Emmaus, they hastened back to Jerusalem to acquaint the *disciples* with it; upon which the rest of *the eleven*, as they knew of Peter's journey, when they saw him return so suddenly and unexpectedly, cried out, *Certainly the Lord has appeared to Simon, else he would never have come back so soon*. (See *Lightfoot, Hor. Hebr.* on Mark xvi. 13. and Luke xxiv. 34.) But, had Peter been one of these *two disciples*, it is no way probable that, in the large account which Luke has given of this matter, (chap. xxiv. 13, *& seq.) his name* would not have been mentioned as well as that of Cleopas; or that a person of his forwardness would have continued silent, and have left Cleopas to carry on the conversation as the *chief speaker*; nor does it suit with the circumstances of the story, that after *Peter's going to the sepulchre* had been related just before, it should be only spoken of in this conversation, (ver. 24.) as what was done, not by one of themselves, but by *certain of them that were with them*; or that it should be said, when they *returned to Jerusalem*, (ver. 33.) that they *found the eleven gathered together*, if one of those that returned belonged to that number, and was one of these *eleven*. (Compare *note* b Luke xxiv. 34. sect. cxcviii.)

g *He appeared to two of them*, &c.] The only reason which Masius has for suspecting *(Supplem. Critic.* Vol. II. p. 1788.) that *this appearance* was different from that which Luke describes as made to the *two disciples* that were on their journey to Emmaus (chap. xxiv. 13. *& seq.)* is this: the companions of these *two disciples* are represented here by Mark as *not believing* the resurrection of Christ when attested by them: whereas when the *two disciples* from Emmaus came to make this report, *the rest*, before they could tell their story, saluted them with that joyful declaration, *The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon*. (Luke xxiv. 34.) But I apprehend these seemingly different accounts may be reconciled, by observing, that various persons in the same company were variously impressed: and that some of those to whom the travellers from Emmaus came, had even after their story was told, some remaining *doubts*, appears from Luke himself. See Luke xxiv. 37, 41. sect. cxcviii. and *note* a on Mat. xxviii. 17. sect. ccii.

h *Into the country to* Emmaus, *&c.*] Emmaus was a village *about sixty furlongs* distant

13 And they went and told *it* unto the residue: neither believed they them.

And they went back directly, *and told it to the rest* of their companions; *yet they did not* all immediately *believe them*, till at length he appeared to all his apostles together once and again, and gave them such convincing evidence as they could not withstand. But these facts are of so great importance, that we shall give a particular narration of each, and first of that which happened on the way to Emmaus, in the next section.

SECT. CXCVI.

Mark XVI. 13.

IMPROVEMENT.

SURELY there is nothing in the whole *sacred story* which does in a more affecting manner illustrate the deplorable hardness of the human heart in this degenerate state, than the portion of it which is now before us. What but the testimony of an *apostle* could have been sufficient to persuade us, that men who had been but a few hours before the witnesses of such an awful scene, who had beheld the *angel descending*, had felt the *earth trembling*, and had seen the *sepulchre* bursting open by a Divine power, and had *fallen down* in helpless astonishment and confusion, perhaps expecting every moment to be themselves destroyed, should that very day, yea, that very morning, suffer themselves to be *hired by a sum of money* to do their utmost to asperse the character of *Christ*, and to invalidate the evidence of his *resurrection*, of which they were in effect *eye-witnesses?*

Mat. xxviii. 11—15.

Nay, how astonishing is it, that the *chief priests* themselves, the public *ministers* of the *Lord of hosts*, could act such a part as this! They hear this full evidence that *he, that Jesus* whom they had murdered, was *risen from the dead;* and they well knew and remembered that he had himself put the *proof of his mission* on this very fact; *a fact* to which the *prodigies* at his death, which they themselves had seen and felt, added an inexpressible weight of probability. Who would not have expected that they should have been alarmed, convinced, and humbled; that they should have turned the remaining days of the *passover* into a public *fast*, and have solicitously sought out him who was so powerfully *declared to be the Son of God*, to cast themselves at his feet, and entreat his pardon and grace? But instead of this, with invincible and growing malice, they set themselves to oppose him, and *bribe* 12 *the*

tant from Jerusalem, as we are told by Luke (chap. xxiv. 13.) and Josephus gives the same account of its situation, *Bell. Jud.* lib. 7. cap. 6. (al. 26.) § 6. And therefore, though they have been frequently confounded, *this* must have been a different place from *that* which was afterwards called *Nicopolis*, which lay near the *Lake of Gennesareth*, at a much greater distance from Jerusalem. See *Reland Palæstin.* lib. ii. cap. vi. p. 427. *& seq.*

SECT. CXCVI.

Mat. XXVIII. 13

the soldiers to testify *a lie*, the most to his dishonour of any that hell could invent. And surely, had not *Christ* been kept out of their sight and power, they would, notwithstanding all this, have endeavoured to bring him down to the *tomb* again, on the very same principles on which they would have *slain Lazarus* after his resurrection. (John xii. 10.) So true does it appear, in this renewed and unequalled instance, that *if men hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.* (Luke xvi. 31.)

No question but these very men, when pressed with the evidences of *Christ's resurrection*, answered, as succeeding *infidels* have presumptuously done, "that he should have *appeared to them*, if he expected they should believe *he was risen.*" But what assurance can we have that the same *prejudices* which overbore the *testimony* of the *soldiers*, might not also have resisted even the *appearance* of *Christ* himself? Or, rather, that the *obstinacy* which led them to overbear conscience in one instance, might not have done it in the other? Justly therefore did God deny what wantonness, and not reason, might lead them to demand: justly did he give them up to dishonour their own understandings, as well as their moral character, by this mean and ridiculous *tale*, which brought men to testify what was done *while they were asleep.*

The most that common sense could make of *their report*, had they deserved the character of honest men, would have been, that they knew nothing of the matter. And we have a thousand times more reason to admire the condescension of God, in sending his *apostles* to these wicked *rulers* with such additional proofs and messages, than to censure his providence in preventing Christ's public appearance. May he deliver us from the treachery and corruption of our own hearts! May he give us a holy tenderness and integrity of soul, that we may see *truth* wheresoever it is, and may follow it whithersoever it leads us; lest God should *choose our delusions*, and give us up in his righteous judgment to *believe a lie*, and to think ourselves wise in that *credulous infidelity* which is destroying its ten thousands amongst us!

SECT. CXCVII.

Christ appears to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, and, having opened the scriptures to them, makes himself known in breaking of bread. Luke XXIV. 13—33.—

SECT. CXCVII.

Luke XXIV. 13.

LUKE XXIV. 13.

WE are now to give some farther account of that fact which was hinted at in the close of

LUKE XXIV. 13.

AND behold, two of them went that same

same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* threescore furlongs.

of the preceding section, of our Lord's appearing to two of his disciples on a journey: *and* the case was this. *Behold* (for it is a very observable story), *two of them were travelling that very day* on which Jesus rose from the dead *to a village called Emmaus, which was about sixty furlongs*, or somewhat more than seven miles, *from Jerusalem.* *And* as they walked along, *they discoursed together of all these* wonderful and important *things which had* lately *happened*, and which could not but lie with great weight on their spirits. *And it came to pass, that as they talked* about the sufferings and death of their beloved Lord, and the report which had been spread that morning of his resurrection, *and argued* the point *together* with visible marks of the greatest concern[a], *Jesus also himself drew near*, as one come from Jerusalem who was going the same way, *and travelled on with them.*

SECT. CXCVII.

Luke XXIV. 13

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

14

15 And it came to pass, that while they communed *together*, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

15

16 But their eyes were holden, that they should not know him.

But that they might not presently discover who he was, and be prevented by this means from expressing their own thoughts with freedom, he appeared to them in something of a different form and habit from what he usually wore (compare Mark xvi. 12, p. 454); and besides what there might be of an uncommon vigour and majesty in his countenance, *their eyes were* so affected and *restrained* by a secret but powerful influence on them, *that* they did not look upon him with that attention and recollection which might have been expected; so that, on the whole, though they were some considerable time in his company, yet *they did not know him*[b].

16

And

a *Argued* the point *together.*] The word συζητειν (as Mr. West observes) signifies to *discuss, examine*, or *inquire together*; and it appears from the connection, that as they were discoursing on the sufferings, and death, and resurrection of Jesus, the scope of *their inquiry* was how to reconcile these events with what had been *foretold* concerning the Messiah, which, by the message that the women had but just before brought from the angels, they were particularly called to *remember.* (Compare Luke xxiv. 6, 7, p. 447, and xviii. 31—33, p. 132.) Accordingly when Jesus had inquired, ver. 17, *What arguments are these that ye are debating one with another?* (for so Mr. West would render it) this is the point he took occasion to illustrate and explain (ver. 26, 27.) by shewing them it was *necessary*, in accomplishment of what was *foretold*, that the Messiah should *suffer these things*, and so should *enter into his glory*, and with this view *he expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.* (See *West's Observ.* p. 69—73.)

b *They did not know him.*] A different habit, and their having no expectation of seeing him, might, in part, prevent their knowing him; yet, as it is said *their eyes were restrained from knowing him*, I am ready to think there was something more than this, even some particular agency of God, to divert their eyes from looking stedfastly upon him, or so to affect their memories as to render them incapable of recollecting who he was. Compare Gen. xxi. 19. Numb. xxii. 31. and 2 Kings vi. 17, 18.

c *One*

SECT. CXCVII.

Luke XXIV.

And he joined himself to them, as it were by accident, and, after the usual salutation, *said to them,* May I inquire *what are these matters which you are conferring upon between yourselves,*
17 *as you walk,* and about which you seem to be so much concerned? for I perceive you to be very earnest in discourse, *and* see that you *appear with a sorrowful countenance.*

17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

18 *And one [of the two], whose name was Cleopas*[c], *answered and said to him,* You seem to be come from Jerusalem, and though you may perhaps be no more than a stranger there, yet is it possible that you should be at any loss to know what is the subject of our conversation, and what it is that gives us such concern? *Are you the only person that sojourns in Jerusalem, and is unacquainted with the* extraordinary *things*[d] *which have been done there in* so public a manner within *these* few *days,* that they engross the conversation of the whole city?

18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

19 *And he said to them, What* are those *things* that you refer to? *And they said to him, Those that relate to Jesus,* who was called *the Nazarene; a man who was a prophet* of the most illustrious character, and greatly *powerful* both *in actions and* in *words;* for he wrought the most astonishing miracles, and taught the most instructive and excellent doctrine, which raised him to the highest honour *before God, and all the people* of Israel, among whom he publicly appeared for
20 several months and years. *And* have you not then heard, *how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up* to the Roman governor, and compelled him by their importunity *to* pass *a sentence of death* upon him, *and* so *crucified him*
21 between two robbers? And this must needs be an unspeakable affliction to us, who are two of his disciples: for we not only thought him a Messenger from God, as the old prophets were, *but we* verily *hoped that he had been* the Messiah himself, even *the* very *person who should have delivered Israel* from the power of their enemies, and

19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people:

20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him:

21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and besides

c *One of the two whose name was Cleopas.*] It has already been observed that Cleopas was the same with Alphæus, the father of James the less and Judas, who were *two* of the *apostles;* (Luke vi. 15, 16.) See *note*[e] on John xiv. 22, p 309, and *note*[b] on John xix. 25, p. 415.—Some suppose that the other was Luke; but Dr. Lightfoot endeavours to prove it was Peter: (see *note*[f] on Mat. xxviii. 15, p. 454.) It seems more probable that he was not one of the *apostles,* but might possibly be one of the number of the *seventy,* whose name is uncertain.

d *Are you the only person that sojourns in Jerusalem, and is unacquainted,* &c.] This is the emphatical import of the *original,* συ μονος παροικεις και ουκ εγνως, &c.

e *And*

side all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.

and have established the long-expected kingdom of God among us: but now we are ready to give up all our hopes; for we have seen him on a cross instead of a throne: *and besides all these* melancholy [*occurrences*], though he had given us intimations of his rising again on the third day, yet *this is now the third day since these things were done*, or since he was condemned and crucified, and we have not yet received any convincing evidence of his being risen from the dead. It is true *indeed*, *some women* among us, *of our society*, *have greatly surprised us* with an account they brought this morning; *who* tell us, they *were* very *early at the sepulchre* in which he was laid, with an intent to embalm him; *And, not having found his body* there, they *came* away in haste to acquaint us with it; *and* besides this they *say*, *that they also saw a vision*, or apparition, *of angels*[c], *who affirmed him to be alive* again, with some other strange and extraordinary circumstance. Nay, *and some men* too *who were with us*, of our own company, *went* themselves *to the sepulchre, and found* [*it*] to be *even so as the women had said*, that is, that the body was gone, and saw the funeral linen laid

21

22

23

24

22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre:

23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

24 And certain of them which were with us, went to the sepulchre, and found *it* even so as the women had

c *And say that they saw also a vision of angels.*] According to the *order* in which the story is digested in the preceding *section* the *women* did not come to the disciples with the *report* of what they had seen between the *appearance of the angels* and *that of Christ* to them; but had first seen both, and therefore must undoubtedly have mentioned both: it may however be concluded, that (as Luke says on their relating what they had seen, ver. 11, *their words seemed to them as an idle tale, and they believed them not*) these *travellers* might apprehend that what the *women* took for an *appearance of Christ* was at most but a *vision of angels* (as some imagined with respect to Peter, Acts xii. 15); and what is added in the *next verse*, with relation to the men there spoken of [*but him they did not see*], may perhaps imply that the *women* pretended also to have *seen Jesus himself*— But I am now inclined to acquiesce in Mr. West's solution of this difficulty, who supposes it was Joanna, and the *other women with her*, who only saw the *angels* and did not see Jesus, that came with *this report* to the disciples; who, though the appearance of the *angels* to them at the sepulchre was after the *two Maries* and *Salome* were gone from thence, yet brought the news of it to the disciples before Mary Magdalene, and those to whom Jesus appeared, arrived with the account that they had *seen the Lord*. For notwithstanding it is certain that Mary Magdalene on Christ's appearing to her went and acquainted the *disciples* with it (Mark xvi. 10, and John xx. 18), yet, as they might be now assembled together by Peter and John at a different place from that where she met with Peter before, it is no way improbable that by Mary's going to Peter's lodgings, who was now gone to meet the *disciples* elsewhere, or by some other accident unknown to us, Joanna and *those with her* might get thither *first* with the *report* of their having seen a *vision of angels*, who had declared that Jesus was alive. Immediately on hearing which, *some men* (of whom it is probable Peter might be the first) went away to the sepulchre, and found things in the same order as the *women* said, but had no sight of Jesus. On whose return these *two disciples* that were going to Emmaus left the company; and though as they were setting out some might inform them that a *report* was brought by Mary Magdalene and some *other women* that they had *seen the Lord*, they might be as *backward to believe it*, and as ready to impute it to the power of imagination, as those in whose presence the report was made.— I am obliged to Mr. West for this view of the matter, which represents it in a clearer light than any other scheme proposed before. (See *West's Observ.* p. 106, 107.)

SECT. CXCVII.

laid in order there; *but him they did not see:* though we are informed that since we left the company some women have come to them, who affirm that he has actually appeared to them himself, and declared that he was risen, and would shew himself to his disciples: but still we have received no certain proof of it ourselves, so that as yet we know not what to think of it, and cannot but be under great concern about it.

had said; but him they saw not.

Luke XXIV.

21

25 *And* upon this our Lord, without discovering who *he* was, *said to them* with some warmth, *O* ye *thoughtless* [*creatures*], *and slow of heart to believe all* the things *that the prophets have* so frequently and clearly *spoken*[f]; which, if you had attentively considered and believed them,

25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

26 would have prevented this surprise! *Was it not necessary*, in order to accomplish those sacred oracles, "which testify before-hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. i. 11), *that the Messiah should suffer* all *these things*, at which you are so much stumbled, *and* [*so*] by his rising from the dead *should enter into his glory?*

26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

27 *And* hereupon *beginning from* the writings of *Moses*, *and* supporting his discourse with the authority of *all the prophets*[g], *he interpreted to them*, in a much clearer light than they had ever seen them in before, *the* principal *things* which either

27 And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself.

[f] *O thoughtless creatures*, &c.] The word ἀνόητοι is by no means of so bad a sound as that of *fools*, by which we translate it: (see *note*[m] on Mat. v. 22, Vol. VI. p. 208.) Yet, as Dr. Bullock justly observes (in his *Vindication of Christ's Resurrection*, p. 174), if the *prophecies* of the *Old Testament* had been (as Mr. *Collins* pretends) only *allegorical*, there could not have been room for such a heavy charge of *stupidity* against these *disciples* for not understanding them. It is, by the way, very weak in Mr. Collins, and some other *deists*, to urge the *slowness of Christ's friends to believe his resurrection*, as an argument that the proofs of it were defective: on the contrary, as Bishop Chandler well replies (in his *Vindication of Christianity*, p. 45, 46), their *believing afterwards* carries the greater weight; for it removes all suspicion of a collusion between Christ and them in his life-time; and also implies an impartial examination of the fact, and the strength of those proofs that vanquished this incredulity.

[g] *Beginning from Moses, and all the prophets.*] It is no way necessary (with Mr. Mede in his ingenious discourse on these words) to suppose that *Christ's sufferings*, *resurrection*, and *exaltation*, are each of them distinctly foretold in each of those *parts* of the *sacred writings* which are mentioned here. It is enough, if Moses gives some intimations concerning him, which succeeding *prophets* carry on; and if, when all their testimonies are taken together, all these events are expressed by some one or other of them. It was very unbecoming the character of an honest writer to represent *our Lord* as here attempting to prove *his resurrection* from *scripture*; which Mr. Collins pretends to have been the case. The precise point in view plainly was to convince them that there was no reason to be scandalized at the death of one whom they took to be the Messiah; nor in general to look on the report of his *resurrection* as a monstrous and incredible tale, But that he was actually *risen* was to be proved another way; which accordingly *our Lord* immediately used by discovering himself to them.

They

either had been typified or were foretold *concerning him in all the scriptures.*

28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

And by this time *they drew near to the village whither they were travelling*; *and* when they came to the house where they designed to tarry, Jesus, like one that was a stranger, began to take his leave; and making no offer to turn in with them, *he seemed as if he were going farther*, intending indeed to do it, if he were not prevented by their request. 28

29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

But they even *compelled him* by their friendly importunity to go in with them [h], *saying*, Let us prevail upon you to *continue* this night *with us*, where we assure you of a most hearty welcome: and as indeed we are so greatly delighted and edified with your company, that we cannot part with you, it may also be inconvenient for you to travel much farther; *for it is* now *towards evening, and the day declines* apace. *And he* complied with their request, and *went in to continue with them.* 29

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed *it* and brake, and gave to them.

And it came to pass, as he sat down to table with them, he took a cake of *bread*; and though he only appeared as a guest there, he assumed the office of the head of the family, *and* looking up to heaven *blessed*, or gave thanks over it; *and* then *brake* it, *and gave* [*it*] *to them*, just in the manner he had formerly been used to. 30

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight.

And they were so surprised at this circumstance, that they now looked upon him more intently than they had done before; and *their eyes were* then *opened* [i], *and*, to their unutterable astonishment and joy, *they knew him*, and plainly saw that it was Jesus their dear Master: *and* as they were preparing to acknowledge him as such, *he* suddenly became invisible, and *withdrew himself from before them* in a moment [k]. 31

And

[h] *They compelled him*, &c.] It might be rendered, *they pressed him*: (see *note* g on Luke xiv. 23, p. 27.) Every body easily sees how little room there was for any proper compulsion in such a case as this. Probably one of them dwelt at Emmaus, or they were going to an inn, or to some friend's house, where they could use the freedom to introduce this unknown stranger, for whom they had so high a veneration.

[i] *Their eyes were opened*] I see no reason to conclude (with Cradock and Brennius) that his undertaking this office of *breaking bread*, or (with others) that some peculiar *action* or *gesture* in performing it, was the thing that made the discovery, (See *note* b on ver. 16.) The *evangelist* strongly intimates that the *miraculous influence*, which before prevented their knowing him, was removed, though the other circumstances mentioned might awaken them to more attentive observation.

[k] Became invisible, and *withdrew himself from before them.*] Erasmus justly observes that the word *vanished* leads the mind to think of the person vanishing as a mere *spectre*; he would therefore render ἀφαντος ἐγενετο as we have done. Beza also observes that ἀπ' αὐτων is more expressive than αὐτοις, and signifies *our Lord's* being *separated from them* by a swift and sudden motion.

SECT. CXCVII.

Luke XXIV.

And they said one to another, How strange is it that we should discover him no sooner! Sure we might easily have known him, even by that inimitable spirit and energy in his discourses, so peculiar to himself; for *did not our* very *hearts* glow, and *burn within us*[1], *while he was talking to us by the way, and while he was opening the scriptures to us?*

32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

And they were not able to conceal such good news, or to defer the publication of that which would give their brethren such a holy transport as they felt in their own breasts; and therefore, late as it was, *they* presently *rose up* from their unfinished meal *that very hour, and* with cheerful speed *returned to Jerusalem*, and told it to the rest of their companions (compare Mark xvi. 13, p. 455); among whom they had soon after the pleasure of seeing their Lord again, in the manner related in the next section.

33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem.—

IMPROVEMENT.

Luke xxiv. 13, 14

How delightful a close of so melancholy *a day* to these pious *travellers! a day* surely long to be remembered by them and by us! They were *on a journey;* but they did not amuse themselves on it with any trifling subject of discourse. Their *hearts were* set upon *Christ*, and therefore their *tongues* were employed in speaking of him. And behold, *Christ himself,* the dear theme of their discourse, makes one among them; he enlightens their eyes and warms their hearts, and at length *makes himself known to them in the breaking of bread.*

15, 30, 31

So may we often be *speaking of Christ*, from the fulness of our hearts, *when we go out, and when we come in!* So may *he* still, in some degree, *join himself with us* in spirit, guiding our souls into Divine knowledge, and animating them with holy love!

They bear an honourable and a just testimony to that great *Prophet* whom God had *raised up for them*, as *mighty before him both in word and deed.* But they knew not how to see through so dark a cloud: their hopes were almost extinguished, and they could only say, *We trusted this had been he that should have redeemed Israel.* Pitiable weakness! Yet too just an emblem of the temper which often prevails in the pious mind; when the *Christian* is ready to give up all, if *deliverance* does not proceed just in the method he expected. Yet was *Christ* even then *delivering Israel*

19, 21

[1] *Did not our hearts burn within us?*] This reading is far more expressive, as well as far more authentic, than that of some *copies*, which, instead of καιομενη here, have κεκαλυμμενη, *Was not our heart veiled? &c.*— Compare Psal. xxxix. 3, and Jer. xx. 9.

Israel in the most glorious and effectual manner, by those very *sufferings* which gave them such distress. *Verily* thou art *the God of Israel*, and *the Saviour*, when *thou art a God that hidest thyself* from us. (Isa. xlv. 15.) SECT. CXCVII. Ver.

In faithful friendship, and with a plainness well becoming his office, the compassionate *Redeemer* upbraids them with their *slowness of heart to believe* these things, when they had received *line upon line, precept upon precept*, concerning them. How justly do we fall under such a *rebuke* in many instances! Let us then humbly say, *Lord, increase our faith!* (Luke xvii. 5.) 25

We should reasonably have thought ourselves *happy* in an opportunity of hearing or reading *this discourse* of *Jesus*, in which he threw such lustre on the *prophecies* of the *Old Testament*, and proved that, according to the tenor of them, it was *necessary that the Messiah should* thus *suffer, and so enter into his glory.* As Providence has denied us this satisfaction, let us however improve this general and very important hint, that *Moses and all the prophets speak of these things.* Let us delight to trace the heavenly beam from its earliest dawn, and to observe how it grew *brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.* May the blessed *Spirit*, by whom those mysterious *predictions* were inspired, so direct our inquiries, that every *veil* may be taken off from our eyes, that we may *see Jesus* in the *Old Testament* as well as in the *New;* and see him in *both* with that lively fervour of holy affection which may cause *our hearts to burn within us!* And oh, that we may especially find that, when we surround *his table*, he *makes himself known to us in the breaking of bread*, in such a manner, as to *fill* our souls *with all joy*, as well as *peace in believing!* (Rom. xv. 13.) 26, 27 30, 31

SECT. CXCVIII.

The two disciples return to make their report to the apostles; and while they are together, Jesus appears to them the evening after his resurrection. Mark XVI. 14. Luke XXIV. 33—43. John XX. 19—23.

LUKE XXIV.—33.

AND [they] found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

LUKE XXIV.—33.

IT was observed before, concerning Cleopas and the other disciple, to whom Jesus discovered himself at Emmaus, that they immediately arose and returned to Jerusalem, to communicate the joyful news to their brethren there. *And* now when they came thither, *they found the eleven* apostles *assembled*[a], *and others with them*, who, SECT. CXCVIII. Luke XXIV. 33

[a] *They found the eleven* apostles *assembled.*] As Paul (1 Cor. xv. 5) calls the company of the apostles *the twelve*, though Judas, the twelfth person, was dead; so Luke here

SECT. CXCVIII.

who, before these two could begin their story, were eager on their part to inform the travellers of the satisfaction they had received since they went out: So that, as soon as they appeared,

Luke XXIV. 34 they heard several of the company *saying*, as with one voice, O brethren, here are good tidings, which will make your hearts leap within you; for *the Lord is risen indeed, and has* himself *appeared to Simon* Peter, who is here present to testify the truth of it[b].

34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

35 *And* the two travellers declared how easily *they* could believe it, and *recounted the things* [*which had happened*] to them *in the way* to Emmaus; *and how*, after many wise and affectionate discourses, *he was* at last *known by them in the breaking of bread*, as they were sitting down to supper. But notwithstanding these repeated testimonies of the resurrection of Christ, yet there were some in the company whose prejudices were so strong, and their faith so weak, that they did not believe either Peter or them[c] (compare Mark xvi. 13, p. 455), though most of them were convinced (as they had just declared) that the Lord was risen indeed.

35 And they told what things *were done* in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

Mark XVI. 14 *And* quickly *afterwards, as they were speaking of these things* among themselves, *while they were sitting at supper*, [*Jesus*] himself *appeared to the eleven*, who were then all together, except one of them. And this appearance was attended with some remarkable circumstances, which shall be now related.

MARK XVI. 14.—[And] afterwards, [as they thus spake,] he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat. [LUKE XXIV. 36.—]

John XX. 19 It was *then on the evening of the same day* on which he rose from the dead, [*which was*], as we have before observed, *the first day of the week*, *even*

JOHN XX. 19. Then the same day, at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors

here calls them *the eleven*, though Thomas, the eleventh person, was absent, as evidently appears from John xx. 24, in the next *section*.

[b] *And has appeared to Simon* Peter.] None of the *evangelists* mention any thing of the circumstances of *this appearance* to Peter; but it has been observed before (*note f*, sect. cxcvi. p. 454), that the *apostle Paul* expressly refers to it, 1 Cor. xv. 5.—The same *apostle* likewise mentions an *appearance of Christ* to James; (*ibid.* ver. 7.) Yet, as nothing is said of *his* having seen him *that day*, it much diminishes the credit of the story which Jerom gives us from the *gospel of the Nazarenes*, that James had *vowed to eat nothing* after the *paschal supper, till Jesus arose*; on which account *our Lord* appeared *first* to him. None of the *apostles* seem to have had such a firm expectation of *Christ's resurrection* as must have been the foundation of such a vow; and the *order* in which Paul mentions *his appearance to James* does very ill suit with this story.—Probably Peter was the *first man*, as Mary Magdalene was the *first woman*, that was favoured with the view of our risen *Saviour*.

[c] Some—did not believe, &c.] Mark expresses it in a general way (chap. xvi. 13) that *they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them*: but we are undoubtedly to understand these words with such a limitation as in the *paraphrase*. See *note g* on Mark xvi. 12, p. 451; and *note a* on Mat. xxviii. 17, sect. ccii.

[d] *Jesus*

doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus [himself], and stood in the midst [of them], and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. [LUKE XXIV.—36.]

SECT. CXCVIII.

John XX. 19.

even when the doors of the room, *where the disciples were gathered together, were shut,* and fastened on the inside, *for fear of the Jews;* as they did not know but some officers of the high-priest might come to apprehend them, on the scandalous pretence that they had stolen away the body, which was now publicly laid to their charge: it was, I say, at this time and place that *Jesus himself* on a sudden *came* in, opening the locks or bolts by a miraculous power[d]; *and* he *stood in the midst of them* in his usual form, *and said to them,* with a mild voice and a gracious aspect, All *peace* and happiness *be unto you;* thereby graciously intimating that he forgave their former cowardice, and would still continue to treat them as his friends, though they knew in their own consciences they had of late behaved themselves in a manner unworthy of that character and relation.

LUKE XXIV. 37. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

Luke XXIV. 37

But they were greatly *amazed and terrified* at this sudden unexpected appearance; *and* as they knew the doors of the room were shut, and in the present hurry of their thoughts did not immediately reflect upon the proofs he had so often given of his Divine power, or on the evidences they had but just before received of his resurrection, some of them *suspected that* what *they saw* was only *a spirit,* or a mere airy phantom, and not a real body.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

38

And he said to them, Why are you thus perplexed and *troubled* at the sight of me, *and why do* these doubtful and unreasonable *suspicions arise in your hearts,* as if it only were the appearance of a spirit that you have here before you?

39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and

39

Behold my hands and my feet, which for your satisfaction still retain the scars of those wounds which I received on the cross, to convince you *that it is I myself,* and no other: *handle me,*

d *Jesus himself came* in, opening the locks or bolts by a miraculous power.] Dr. *Wallis (on the Sabbath,* p. 25) thinks the expression of *the doors being shut* intends no more, than that what follows happened *in the evening, when the doors are used to be shut up.* But, as *the doors* are said to have been *shut for fear of the Jews,* it strongly implies they were *fastened within;* and all that was herein *miraculous* was the causing them, as of themselves, to fly open, and shut again very suddenly.—*Elsner* has shewn *(Observ.* Vol. I. p. 351) that this is sometimes spoken of by some of the *pagan* writers, especially those who may be suspected of copying from the *evangelists,* as the effect of a supernatural power attending the *appearance* of their *deities,* or other extraordinary persons, among them.—The argument which the *Papists* bring from hence, to prove that *two bodies* may be in the same place at the same time, and consequently *one* in different places, is so evidently built upon an absurd interpretation of the clause under consideration, as not to deserve any farther notice.

e *He*

SECT. CXCVIII.

me, if you please, *and see* whether this be not really a solid and substantial body: *for* you know that *a* mere *spirit* or phantom *hath not flesh and bones as you see me have*, but is only an empty form presenting itself to the eye, yet eluding the grasp of any hand.

and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.

Luke XXIV. 39

40 *And saying this, he shewed them his hands and his feet, and* even the mark which the spear had left in *his side*, which appeared like a large wound, newly, though perfectly, healed[e]: and several of them, and among the rest John the beloved apostle, who records this circumstance, had the curiosity particularly to examine it. (Compare 1 John i. 1). And *the disciples therefore were* exceeding *glad*, as it might reasonably be expected they should be, *when they* thus *saw the Lord*, and learnt by such infallible tokens that he was really alive.

40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his* hands and *his* feet [and *his* side.] [JOHN XX. 20.—]

John XX. 20.

JOHN XX.—20. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

Luke XXIV. 41, 42, 43

And for their further satisfaction, *when* [*some of them*] were so transported, that they *as yet believed not* their own eyes *for joy, and were* so *astonished* that they hardly knew where they were, *he said to them, Have ye any food here* left, that I may eat with you? *And they gave him* such as they had, even *part of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb*, on which they had been supping just before. *And taking* [*it*], *he eat before them*, that thus they might be fully satisfied that he was actually alive, and had a true and real body. (Compare Acts x. 41.)

LUKE XXIV. 41. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb.

43 And he took *it* and did eat before them.

Mark XVI. 14

And when *he* had for a while gently *upbraided* and reproved *them for their unbelief, and* for *the hardness of their hearts, that they had not believed* the repeated testimony of *those who had* already *seen him since he was risen* from the dead, and that, even after his own appearance to them, they should be capable of entertaining any further doubts; *Then*, that they might be satisfied that he had graciously forgiven them, *Jesus said to them again, Peace be unto you:* may all prosperity and happiness attend you! *As* [*my*] *Father sent me*, and gave me authority to act in his name, *so also I send you* to act as my apostles, under the important character of my ambassadors to the children of men.

MARK XVI.—14. And [he] upbraid-d them with their unbelief, and hardness of heart,-because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

John XX. 21

JOHN XX. 21. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so I send you.

And

[e] *He shewed them his hands and his feet*, &c.] Probably *these marks* were retained in his body when raised from the dead, on purpose to give the greater satisfaction to the disciples of the truth of his *resurrection*; though indeed without that additional circumstance the evidence might have been very satisfactory.

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

And saying this, he in a solemn manner *breathed upon* [*them*], *and said to them* as one that had Divine authority, *Receive ye the Holy Spirit*, and take this as an earnest of what you shall further receive not many days hence: for thus will I shortly breathe out the miraculous influences of my Spirit upon you, in a greater abundance than you have ever yet received them, to qualify and furnish you for this important office. In consequence of which, *whose soever sins you* shall *remit*, or shall declare to be forgiven, *they are remitted* and forgiven *to them*; [*and*] *whose soever* [*sins*] *you* shall *retain*, or shall pronounce to be unpardoned, *they are* assuredly *retained*, and their guilt lies upon them: for you shall have a power, not only of declaring what is lawful or unlawful under the gospel-dispensation, but also of sending or removing miraculous punishments, and of discerning the spirits of men in such perfection, as to be able with certainty to declare to particular persons in question, whether they be, or be not, in a state of pardon and acceptance with God. (See note h on Mat. xvi. 19. Vol. VI. p. 463.)

SECT. CXCVIII.

John XX. 22.

23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.

23

And after this discourse with his disciples, at his first appearance to them, Jesus departed from them for that time, and left them to spend the rest of the evening in those delightful exercises of devotion which this great occasion had so natural a tendency to inspire.

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH pleasure let us echo back the words of the *apostles*, and join in that glad anthem which so well suits a resurrection-day, *The Lord is risen*; he is risen *indeed*. We owe our daily praises to God for the abundant demonstration he has given us of so important a fact, for every *appearance of Christ* to his *disciples*, and for all the *infallible tokens* by which *he shewed himself* to be *alive after his passion*. (Acts i. 3.)

Luke xxiv. 34

He came with *peace* and blessings in his mouth; he came to disperse their *fears*, and to assure them of his forgiving love. How strong were those *prejudices* which so hardly yielded to such convincing proofs? And how rich was that *grace* which condescended to overcome them!

Ver. 36—41.

Christ breathed on the apostles, that they might *receive the Holy Spirit*. May he also *breathe* on our souls, and fill us with that glorious and Divine gift, which, if it qualified the *apostles* for their extraordinary office, may much more furnish *us* for the common

John XX. 22.

SECT. CXCVIII. common duties of life! May we try our state by the characters which they have laid down in their inspired writings; in which sense, among others, we may assure ourselves, that, if they have 23 declared *our sins to be remitted*, they *are remitted:* and, if indeed they are so, we need not to be much concerned by whom they are *retained*. Vain and arrogant men may claim a despotic power, which God never gave, and which these words are far from implying. But, whatsoever be the sentence they may pass, *they whom God blesseth, are blessed indeed.* (1 Chron. xvii. 27.) May we always esteem it *a very small thing* to be *judged of man's judgment*, (1 Cor. iv. 3.) pitying, rather than resenting, the rashness of those who claim any such discretionary *sacerdotal power* as can give the real penitent any alarm, or the impenitent any encouragement to continue in sin!

SECT. CXCIX.

Christ appears to the eleven a second time, a week after the former; particularly offering to Thomas, who had before been absent, the most sensible proofs of his resurrection. John XX. 24—29.

JOHN XX. 24.

SECT. CXCIX. WE mentioned in the last section Christ's appearing to his disciples on the evening of that day on which he arose; *but* it is farther to be observed, that *Thomas one of the twelve*, who was also *called Didymus*, or the twin-brother, *was not with them* at that time *when Jesus* 25 *came. The other disciples therefore*, as soon as they met with him, *told him* in a transport of joy, *We have seen the Lord* with our own eyes, and consequently can have no farther doubt of the truth of his resurrection, for he has condescended to shew us the very marks of those wounds he received on the cross. *But he said to them*, This is a matter of too great importance for me to believe on any report, even on yours; and more is necessary to convince me of the truth of it, than merely a transient sight of mine own eyes: for *unless I shall* evidently *see in his hands*, as you say you have done, *the mark of the nails, and*, more than that, *shall put my finger upon the* very individual *mark of the nails* [a], *and put my hand upon* the very scar made by

John XX. 24.

BUT Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

[a] *And shall put my finger upon the mark of the nails.*] I am sensible it might seem more elegant, with the *Prussian translators*, to wave the *repetition* and to render it, *and put my finger into it:* but, on farther reflection, there seems to be a beauty in

by the spear in *his side*[b], *I will not* by any means, or on any testimony whatsoever, *believe* his resurrection. SECT. CXCIX. John XX. 26.

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you.

And, as there was a great degree of faulty obstinacy in such a resolution, our Lord left him a whole week under the perplexity which it must necessarily give him: but *after eight days*, or on that day seven-night from our Lord's rising, *his disciples were again within* doors as before, *and Thomas* was *with them*; [*and*] *Jesus came* to them again, *the doors being shut* and fastened, as in the former instance; *and* suddenly throwing them open, and in a moment shutting them again, he *stood in the midst* of them, *and said*, as in his former gracious salutation, *Peace be unto you!*

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.

And *then*, to let them see that he was not unacquainted with what had lately passed among them in his absence, as well as to convince the over-scrupulous disciple, *he said to Thomas, Reach* forth *thy finger hither, and behold*, and examine *my hands, and reach thine hand* hither, *and put it on my side*[c] *and be not incredulous* any longer, *but believe* on this evidence at least which addresses itself at once to so many of thy senses. 27

28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God.

And Thomas, overwhelmed at once with such abundant demonstration, and such humble condescension, fell under the conviction in a moment; and, instead of entering on any farther scrutiny[d] *answered and said to him*, in the utmost transport of astonishment and joy, *My Lord, and my God!* as if he should have said, I do 28

in this *repetition* which admirably represents the language of a *positive man*, declaring again and again what he insisted upon; which I have therefore endeavoured to express in the *paraphrase*, in terms which such persons often use.

b *And put my hand upon his side.*] So I would choose to render it, rather than *into his side*; agreeable to Dr. *Stevenson's* just criticism, that εις here signifies *upon*; as εις την γην (John viii. 6.) is *upon the ground*; and εις την χειρα αυτε (Luke xv. 22.) *upon his hand*. See Dr. *Stevenson* against *Woolston on Christ's Miracles*, p. 324.

c *Reach* forth *thy finger hither*, &c.] It is observable, that *Spinoza* himself could find out no more plausible objection against this evidence of the *resurrection* of Christ, than to say, that the *disciples* were *deceived* in what they imagined they saw, heard, and felt, (*Vie de Spin.* p. 32.) which, if granted, would be in effect to allow that no men could be competent judges of any fact whatsoever relating to their own sensations, and consequently would overthrow all *human testimony* in courts of judicature and elsewhere.

d Instead of entering on any farther scrutiny.] It is not said that he actually *touched the wounds*; and *our Lord* afterwards says, (ver. 29.) that *his belief* was built on *sight*; which seems to intimate that this *condescension* of *our Lord*, together with the additional evidence arising from the *knowledge* which he plainly had of that unreasonable demand which Thomas had made in his absence, quite overcame him: a turn of mind exceeding natural to so frank a temper as that of Thomas appears to have been.

e My

SECT. CXCIX.

John XX. 28. I do not only now acknowledge thee to be Jesus my Lord, infallibly risen from the dead, but I confess thy Divine knowledge and power, and prostrate myself before thee, as the great incarnate Deity, the glorious Emmanuel [e].

29 *Jesus says to him, Thomas thou hast believed, because thou hast seen me,* and hast received these sensible demonstrations of my resurrection; and it is well: but still more *happy are they who have not seen* me themselves, *and* [*yet*] *have believed* on the credible testimony of others; for they have shewn a greater degree of candour and humility, which renders the faith it produces so much the more acceptable [f],

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 25 We most evidently see in this instance of *Thomas*, as well as in many circumstances of the story mentioned above, how far the *apostles* were from being rashly *credulous* in the important fact of *Christ's resurrection*. It is apparent, they erred in the contrary extreme; yet our gracious *Lord* condescended to satisfy *scruples* 26 which were carried to an extravagance. He renewed his *visit*, and at the same time renewed his *salutation* too, *Peace be unto you* was still his language; nor did he only speak, but act, as one who wished it, and was determined to give it.

What *peace* must it administer to the mind of this good man 27 when *his Lord* said, *Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands and reach hither thine hand, and put it on my side; and be not faithless, but believing!* Evidently did he hereby shew, not only that he was *risen from the dead*, but that he circumstantially *knew* those events which had passed in his bodily absence, and needed

[e] *My Lord, and my God!*] The irrefragable argument arising from these words in proof of the *deity* of our *blessed Lord* (which so many good writers have stated at large,) cannot be evaded by saying, that these words are only an *exclamation of surprise*, as if he had said, *Good God, is it indeed thus!* For it is expressly declared he spoke these words *to him*; and, no doubt, Christ would severely have reproved him if there had not been just reason to address him thus.

[f] *Happy are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.*] If it be queried, Why *a greater blessedness* is pronounced on those who believe on more slender evidence: it may be answered, that *our Lord* by no means intended to assert, that every one who *believes without seeing*, is *happier* than any one *believing on sight*; for then the meanest Christian now would be *more happy* than the greatest of the *apostles*; but only, that where the effects of that *faith* were equal, it argued greater simplicity, candor, and wisdom, to yield to reasonable evidence *without seeing*, than could be argued merely from having believed *on sight*, after sufficient evidence of another kind had been proposed. It was therefore in effect telling Thomas "It would have been more acceptable to him if he had not stood out so long:" and it was doing it in such a manner as would be most calculated for the comfort and encouragement of believers in future ages, to whom, in many of his speeches to the *apostles* themselves, *our Lord* expresses a most obliging and affectionate regard.

a Some

needed not human information. Let us then ever behave ourselves as *in the presence of Christ.* Let us act, and speak, and think, in such a manner as may bear his inspection; and, struck with these united demonstrations of wisdom, power and grace, let us prostrate ourselves before him, and say, *Our Lord, and our God!* thus *honouring the Son as we honour the Father* (John v. 23), and adoring the *indwelling Deity,* through this *veil of flesh,* in which it has been pleased to enshrine itself, and kindly to attemper, though not entirely to conceal, its rays. SECT. CXCIX. Ver. 27 28

Though we have not those sensible manifestations which were granted to *Thomas,* let it suffice us that the *apostles* were the *appointed witnesses* of all these things; and *what they saw with their eyes, and their hands handled of the word of life, that have they declared unto us* (1 John i. 1, 3). Let us thankfully receive so convincing a testimony. Let us shew an upright and candid mind in accepting *such evidence* as the wisdom of God has seen fit to give us; remembering that a truly rational *faith* is the more acceptable to God, in proportion to the difficulties which it is able to surmount; and that there are peculiar *blessings* in store for them *who have not seen and yet have believed.* 29

SECT. CC.

Christ discovers himself to Peter and several other disciples at the sea of Tiberias, while they were fishing there. John XXI. 1—14.

JOHN XXI. 1.

AFTER these things, Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias: and on this wise shewed he *himself:*

JOHN XXI. 1.

SOME time *after these things*[a], between the last interview he had with the apostles at Jerusalem, and the public appearance which he afterwards made to the whole body of his disciples, *Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples, at the sea of Tiberias,* near that mountain in Galilee where he had appointed to meet them: (Mat. xxviii. 16, sect. ccii.) *And* the manner in which *he* now *manifested* [*himself*] to them was *thus:* SECT. CC. John XXI. 1.

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathaniel of Cana,

2 *Simon Peter, and Thomas* who was *called Didymus, and Nathaniel* who was an inhabitant *of Cana,* a town *in Galilee* often mentioned in the foregoing

[a] Some time *after these things.*] Grotius thinks *this whole chapter* was written by some *elders* of the *church* of Ephesus, and added to the rest of the book by the approbation of that society, as agreeable to the relations which they had heard from the mouth of St. John; and Le Clerc follows him in this conjecture; but Dr. Mill has taken pains to invalidate it (*Prolegom.* p. 249); and the beginning of ver. 24 destroys the force of Grotius's argument from the latter part of it. See *note* [f] on *that verse,* at the close of the *next section.*

[b] *Nathaniel*

SECT. CC.

foregoing history[b], *and* also *the* [*two sons*] *of Zebedee*, James and John, *and two other of his disciples* with them[c], *were* one day *together* in

John XXI. 2. Galilee; whither they were returned by Christ's direction, to wait for the accomplishment of what he had promised, that they should see him on a certain mountain in those parts, and where they expected in a few days to meet with most of their brethren. (Compare Mat. xxviii. ver. 7, 10, sect. cxcv. and ver. 16, sect. ccii.) And

3 while they were thus waiting, *Simon Peter*, that their time might not lie on their hands, and that he might make some provision for his own support, and for the entertainment of his friends, *says to them*, *I* will *go a fishing*[d]: and *they say to him*, *We also* will *go* along *with thee*, and give thee what assistance we can. *They went out* therefore, *and immediately took ship*, *and* spent not only *that* evening, but all the following *night*, in throwing their nets; but though it was the properest time for fishing, yet *they caught nothing* worth the mentioning.

4 *And when the morning was now come*, *Jesus* appeared and *stood upon the shore*; *nevertheless*, *the disciples*, who had no expectation of seeing him there, being at some distance from him, and it not being yet perfectly light, *knew not that it*

5 *was Jesus*. *Then* as they approached within call, *Jesus said to them*, *Have you any thing to eat*, my *lads?* or have you taken fish enough to furnish out a meal? *They answered him*, *No*; we

6 have been toiling here all night in vain. *And he said to them*, Let me then advise you to *throw the net on the right side of the ship*, *and you will* undoubtedly *find* [*some*.] And, willing to try at least whether this stranger conjectured right, *they*

Cana, in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They

[b] *Nathaniel of Cana in Galilee.*] There is no doubt but this Nathaniel is the person mentioned before, John i. 45.—Dr. *Lightfoot* (*Hor. Heb.* on Mat. x. 3.) Mr. *Fleming* (*Christol.* Vol. II. p. 176), and some others, take him to have been *Bartholomew the apostle*; but I think they give no convincing reason for that opinion.

[c] *Two other of his disciples.*] It is indeed uncertain who these *two disciples* were; though Dr. *Lightfoot* conjectures they were Andrew and Philip (*Hor. Heb. in loc.*) which is not improbable, as they were both inhabitants of Bethsaida, near the *sea of Tiberias*. (John i. 44.) It is however a strange argument against it, to say "that John must be *one*, though he is not here mentioned," when he is so well known to have been one of *the sons of Zebedee*, who are numbered here among those that were present.

[d] *I will go a fishing.*] It appears from this story, that several of the *apostles* were now returned to Galilee, where Christ had appointed to meet them; which shews that the discourse (Luke xxiv. 49, sect. ccii.) in which *our Lord* commanded them to *continue at Jerusalem till the Holy Ghost fell upon them*, must come in *after this chapter*, and not *before it*, as it is placed in many *harmonies*.

[e] *They*

They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

they threw the net *therefore* as he had directed them; *and now they were not able to draw it* up into the ship again, *on account of the multitude of fishes* which they had enclosed in it[e].

7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved, saith unto Peter, It is the Lord: Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fisher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

7 *Then* John, *that disciple whom Jesus* peculiarly *loved*, when he saw such astonishing success after all their fruitless toil and disappointment before, *says unto Peter, it is* undoubtedly *the Lord*, who has, on this occasion, renewed that miracle which he wrought in thy ship some years ago, when he first called us to attend him. (See Luke v. 4—10, Vol. I. sect. xxxiv.) *Simon Peter therefore hearing* him say, with the appearance of such good reason, that *it was the Lord*, was so transported, that he immediately *girded on his coat (for he was* in a manner *naked*, having nothing on but his inner-garment)[f], *and threw himself* directly *into the sea*, and swam to shore, that he might pay his earliest duty to his dear Lord, and testify his joy in the condescending visit he was making them.

8 And the other disciples came in a little ship, (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

8 *And the other disciples* making the best of their way, *came* to him as fast as they could *with the boat, drawing the net [full] of fishes* after them; *for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits*, or one hundred yards.

9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

9 *As soon then as they came ashore, they saw a fire of burning coals laid* ready there, *and fish laid upon it, and* a sufficient quantity of *bread* at hand; which Jesus had miraculously prepared, that they might see how easily he could make provision for them, even when they were destitute of the ordinary means of supply.

10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

10 And, that due notice also might be taken of the miraculous draught they had now made, *Jesus said to them, Bring* hither [*some*] *of the fish which you have now taken.*

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty

11 And *Simon Peter went aboard, and*, with the help of his brethren, *drew the net to land;* and it was *full of great fishes*, which,

[e] *They were not able to draw it* up into the ship again, &c.] This was not merely a demonstration of the power of *our Lord*, but a kind providential supply for them and their families, which might be of service to them when they *waited* afterwards *in* Jerusalem according to his order: and it was likewise a sort of emblematical representation of the great success which should attend their attempts *to catch men* in the *net* of the *gospel*. Compare Luke v. 9, 10. Vol. VI. p. 138.

[f] In a manner *naked*, having nothing on but his inner-garment.] It is of great importance, in order to vindicate several stories in *scripture*, which the ignorance or malice of some modern writers has charged with *indecency*, to observe, that among the Jews (as Grotius and many others have shewn) they were said to be *naked* who had only an under garment on. Compare 1 Sam. xix. 24. 2 Sam. vi. 20. Isa. xx. 2, 3. and Acts xix. 16.

SECT. CC. John XXI. 11. which, upon taking the number of them, they found to be no less than *an hundred and fifty-three; and though they were so many* and so great, *yet the net was not broke.*

fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

12 Then *Jesus said to them, Come* [*and*] *refresh yourselves*[g], after the fatigue you have had for so many hours. *And none of the disciples presumed to ask him, Who art thou?* or took upon them to inquire how he came thither, or whence he procured the provision he then offered them? well *knowing that it was the Lord*, though he conversed with them in something of a distant manner; but left him to proceed in his own way, as judging it most respectful to leave it to him to direct the discourse to more intimate and particular subjects, in such a manner, and by such degrees, as he should think fit; which he presently after did.

12 Jesus saith unto them, Come *and* dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 *Jesus therefore came and took bread*, as the master of the feast, *and*, having blessed it, as he used to do, *gave* [*it*] to each of *them: and likewise* gave them some of the broiled *fish.*

13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

14 And *this was now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to* such a number of *his disciples* at once[h], *after he was risen from the dead;* and it was attended with some very remarkable and instructive circumstances, which will be particularly mentioned in the next section.

14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 1, 3 *CHRIST* first *called* these *disciples* when they were employed in the duties of their proper profession in life, and he now *manifests himself to them* while they were so engaged; perhaps particularly

[g] *Come* and *refresh yourselves.*] So I choose to render the word αριστησατε, rather than *dine;* as Homer sometimes uses αριστον to signify *a morning's meal.*

[h] *The third time he shewed himself to* such a number, &c.] Grotius explains this of the *third day* of his appearance; for he had first appeared to several on the *day of his resurrection;* then, *after eight days, he came to his disciples*, when Thomas was present; and now again, *he shewed himself at the sea of Tiberias.* And it is plainly necessary that the words should be understood with some such *limitation*, to make them consistent with the accounts given by the other *evangelists* and St. Paul; which, when laid together, will prove, that *this* was indeed at least the *seventh appearance* that Jesus had made since his *resurrection.* For he *appeared first* to Mary Magdalene (Mark xvi. 9.) and *then* to the *women* as they returned from the *sepulchre* (Mat. xxviii. 9.) after this he was *seen of Peter* (1 Cor. xv. 5.) and then *the same day* by the *two disciples* that were going to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 13—31.) and again *the same evening* he appeared to the *disciples* when Thomas was absent (John xx. 19.) on *that day sevennight* he appeared to the *eleven* when *Thomas was with them* (John xx. 26.) and now *after these things* he *shewed himself* a seventh time *to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias* (John xxi. 1.)—But, as John had particularly mentioned before *the two appearances* which Jesus made to *his disciples* when they were together (John xx. 19, 26.) it seems most reasonable to conclude, that he reckons this *the third* as referring to these.

[a] *Dost*

particularly intending thereby to encourage an honest *industry*, in which indeed we are far more likely to enjoy his presence, and to converse with him, than when we throw away our time in idleness and inactivity. SECT. CC. John xix. 1, 3

A while he leaves them to *labour in vain*, that when the plentiful *draught of fishes* came, it might be the more remarkable. Sometimes he may deal thus with his *ministers*, in their endeavours *to catch men*; that we may be convinced thereby, to whose power we owe our success, and may not *sacrifice to* our own *net*, *or burn incense to* our own *drag*. (Hab. i. 16.) 3—6

All the *disciples* rejoiced at his appearance; but *Peter* was the foremost to cast himself at his feet. Conscious that so *much had been forgiven him*, he is solicitous to shew that he *loves much*. (Luke vii. 47.) So may the remembrance of our miscarriages work upon us, to make us more vigorous in *Christ's* service, and to inspire us with such zeal and affection as *many waters may not be able to quench*, *nor the floods to drown!* (Cant. viii. 7.) 7

Let us not imagine *this miracle* was merely intended for a demonstration of *Christ's* Divine *power* over all that *passeth through the paths of the sea* (Psal. viii. 8); it was also the work of *wisdom* and *bounty*. By the sale of *so many large* and fine *fishes* a seasonable provision was made for the subsistence of his *disciples at Jerusalem*, while they were there *waiting for the descent of the Spirit*. (Luke xxiv. 49.) Let every circumstance of this kind encourage us to trust him, as the *Lord* of *nature* and of *grace*, who will withhold from us no necessary supply of either, while we are making it our humble and faithful care to promote his glory. 11—13

SECT. CCI.

Christ discourses with Peter at the sea of Tiberias, and gives a remarkable prophecy concerning the death of that apostle. John XXI. 15—24.

JOHN XXI. 15.

SO when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love

JOHN XXI. 15.

WHEN therefore they had made a plentiful *meal* on this kind provision which Jesus had supplied them with, there happened some circumstances in his succeeding discourse with his disciples which may be worthy of more distinct notice; and particularly this: *Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon* [*son*] *of Jonas, dost thou love me more than these* do[a]? Or wilt thou now main- SECT. CCI. John XXI. 15

[a] *Dost thou love me more than these* do?] The *original* words πλειον τουτων, are ambiguous; and, besides the sense I have given them, they might signify, *Dost thou love*

SECT. cci.

John XXI. 15

maintain that thou hast such a zealous regard for me above any of thy brethren, as thou once didst profess, when thou saidst, that though all should forsake me, thou wouldst not do it? (Mat. xxvi 33, p. 343.) *He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee* sincerely, though I presume not to say more than any of my brethren. [*Jesus*] *said to him*, If so, *feed my lambs*[b]; and as I shall favour thee so far as to commit my church, in part, to thy apostolic care, remember that the most acceptable way of expressing thy love to me will be by taking care even of the weakest and feeblest of my flock.

love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16 And, to impress this with the greater force upon his mind, *he says to him again the second time, Simon* [*son*] *of Jonas, dost thou* indeed *love me? He answers him* as he had done before, *Yea, Lord*, I appeal to thee for the sincerity of that regard which I have to thee, *thou knowest that I* truly *love thee.* [*Jesus*] *says to him* again, *Feed* then *my sheep* with tenderness and care, and thereby demonstrate the truth of thine affection to me.

16 He saith to him again the second time Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

17 And, that it might never be forgot by him, or any that were present, *he says to him the third time, Simon* [*son*] *of Jonas*, wilt thou abide by what thou hast said? *Dost thou* truly *love me*, and

17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because

love me more than thou lovest *these* nets, and other instruments of thy trade; so as to prefer my service to any worldly advantages? In this sense Dr. *Whitby* explains them, and argues for it from this consideration, that otherwise Peter could not have appealed to Christ, that he did *thus love him*; since it was impossible for him exactly to judge of the proportion between *his own love to Christ* and *that of his brethren.* But that learned *commentator* did not observe how modestly *the reply* is adjusted on that head. Peter only answers, *Yea, Lord* (or *assuredly, Lord*), *thou knowest that I love thee*; but does not add, *more than these.* And this beautiful circumstance in the *answer* shews how much he was humbled and improved by the remembrance of *his fall.*

b *Feed my lambs*] The *paraphrase* shews how fair a sense may be given to these words, without supposing they invest Peter with any such distinguished authority in the church, as, contrary to the most convincing arguments, the Papists suppose, and make this supposition the corner-stone of their Babel. *Bellarmin's distinction* between *lambs* and *sheep*, as signifying the *laity* and *clergy*, is very trifling, nor can any example of the like *distinction* be produced. It is much more natural to suppose in general, that *lambs* here (as in Isa. xl. 11, and many other places) may signify the *weakest of the flock*, which, by the way, it is by no means to be taken for granted that the *laity* always are. So that, on the whole, this argument for the *Pope's supremacy* seems almost as contemptible as *that* which some writers of that communion have drawn from these words, to prove that *heretics*, though *princes*, are to be *put to death* by authority derived from Peter; because *feeding the flock* implies a power of *killing wolves.* (See *Boyle's Philos. Comment.* Vol. I. p. 82.)—I shall only add, that some have observed, that αρνια, being the *diminutive* of αρνα, signifies *the least of my lambs*; and, if we interpret this as an intimation of *the care* which Peter, as a *minister of Christ*, was to take of *little children*, it seems perfectly congruous to the wisdom and tenderness of *the great Shepherd of the sheep*, to give so particular an injunction concerning it; as I have shewn at large in my *Ten Sermons* on *the Power and Grace of Christ, Serm.* vii.

c When

cause he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

and will that love of thine bear the severest trial? *Peter was* exceedingly *grieved, that he said to him the third time, Dost thou love me? And he said to him* with great earnestness, My dear *Lord, thou knowest all things*; thou seest the very hearts of men, and, seeing mine, *thou knowest that I* do indeed *love thee*; though my late lamentable fall might justly bring it into question, and my repeated denial of thee renders me worthy of such a rebuke as this repeated inquiry implies. *Jesus says to him*, Well, Peter, I acknowledge thou dost indeed love me, and know how to distinguish between frailty and treachery; and therefore I not only own thee as a disciple, but confirm thee in thine apostolic office, again requiring thee to *feed my sheep*; and be assured, that I consider thy zeal for the edification and comfort of my church, as the most acceptable token thou canst possibly give of thy love to me.

SECT. CCI. John XXI. 17.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldst not.

And indeed thou shalt approve that love, not only by labours, but by sufferings too: for *verily verily, I say unto thee*, and would have thee to remember it as what shall surely come to pass, that *when thou wast* a *young* man, *thou didst gird thyself, and walk about* without controul *whithersoever thou wouldst; but when thou art grown old*[c], *thou shalt stretch out thine hands, and another shall gird thee*, as a helpless prisoner, *and* at length shall *carry thee whither thou wouldst not* naturally incline to go, even to those sufferings to which flesh and blood have the strongest aversion: yet I know that, notwithstanding thy late miscarriage, thy love to me will bear thee through all. 18

19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

And *this he said, signifying* and intimating *by what kind of death he should glorify God*; namely, that he should suffer martyrdom, and die with his hands stretched out on a cross. *And, having said this*, yet farther to illustrate and explain it, *he says to him, Follow me* then, as I now walk along, and shew that thou art willing to conform to my example, and to follow me even to the death of the cross. 19

20 Then Peter turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus

And Peter did so with great alacrity; but *turning about*, he *saw that* other *disciple whom Jesus* 20

c *When thou art grown old.*] Peter's *crucifixion* is said to have happened about *forty years* after this; but the time is not exactly and certainly known.

d Silently

SECT. CCI.

John XXI. 20. *Jesus loved*, silently *following him*, in humble token of his readiness likewise to suffer the greatest extremities in the service of so dear a Master[d]. Now, by the way, it may be recollected, that this was the apostle John, for whom our Lord had a peculiar kindness, *who also at* the paschal *supper lay in his bosom, and said* to him, *Lord, who is he that will betray thee?* (See John xiii. 25, p. 286.)

sus loved, following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21 *Peter* therefore observing this disciple, and *seeing him* follow Jesus in the same manner as he did himself, though he was not called to it, *says unto Jesus, Lord, what* [*shall*] *this man* [*do*], and what is to become of him? Must he, who is now following with me, partake of the like sufferings, and in like manner testify his love by dying for thee?

21 Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, Lord, and what *shall* this man *do?*

22 *Jesus says to him*, Is that any immediate concern of thine, Peter? *If I will that he tarry*, or continue alive, *till I come* in power and great glory to execute the judgment I have threatened on mine enemies, *what* [*is that*] *to thee*, or to any one else? *Follow thou me:* mind thou thine own duty, and endeavour to prepare for thine own sufferings; and pry not with a vain curiosity into secret events which may befall him, or any other of thy brethren.

22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? Follow thou me.

23 Now as this answer was not rightly understood, *this saying therefore went abroad among the brethren*, or the other followers of Christ, *that this disciple should not die*[e]: and the advanced age to which he lived gave some farther colour for it: *but* it was entirely built upon a mistake; for *Jesus did not say to him*, or of him, *that he should not die; but* only, as it was expressed

23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come,

d Silently *following* him, in humble token of his readiness, &c.] There is a spirit and tenderness in this plain passage which I can never read without the most sensible emotion. Christ orders Peter to *follow him*, in token of his *readiness* to be *crucified* in his cause. John stays not for the call; he rises, and *follows* too; but he says not one word of his love and his zeal. He chose that the action only should speak that; and when he records this circumstance, he tells us not what that action meant; but with great simplicity relates the fact only. If here and there a generous heart that, like his own, glows with *love to Christ*, sees and emulates it, be it so; but he is not solicitous men should admire it. It was addressed to *his Master;* and it was enough that he understood it.—And can any one be himself base enough to imagine that such a man could spend his life in promoting *a pernicious falsehood* (for such, in the *second edition* of the *ninth* of my *ten sermons* I largely prove the *apostolic testimony* to be, if it were *a falshood*), and at last, in his old age, when his relish for every thing but goodness and immortality was gone, would so solemnly attest it, as he does in the conclusion of his *gospel?* May God deliver every one that reads this from a head so fatally beclouded by the corruptions of the heart!

e *This saying therefore went abroad among the brethren*, &c.] That there was such a notion and *tradition* among the ancients, *Fabricius* has particularly shewn, *Cod. Apoc. Nov. Test.* Vol. II. p. 533.

come, what *is that* to thee?

pressed before, *If I will that he tarry*, or continue alive, *till I come*, *what* [*is that* [*to thee?* SECT. CCI.

24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

And *this is the disciple who testifies concerning these things, and hath written them* as above: *and* since he was an eye-witness to them, and has not failed, in a proper manner, to produce in the churches the credentials necessary to prove the veracity and exactness of his writings, *we* certainly *know that his testimony is true*, and doubt not but every candid reader will receive it accordingly[f]. John XXI. 24.

IMPROVEMENT.

WHAT if *our Lord Jesus Christ* should put the same *question* to us that he did to *Peter*, in this remarkable passage, and should thus *repeat* it again and again? Are there none of us who should be at a loss for an answer? None of us to whom he might say, *I know that you have not the love of Christ in you?*—Or are there none of us who apprehend, that, if we had ourselves been thus pressed, we could, at the very best, only have said, *Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest that I cannot tell whether I love thee or not?*—Blush, and be confounded, O my soul, if thou must reply with such uncertainty to a question of so great importance, and in a case where all the ardour of the heart might be so justly expected! Ver. 15--17

But are there not still some of us who through Divine grace could reply with pleasure, *Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that*, notwithstanding all the unallowed and lamented infirmities of our lives, *we* do indeed *love thee?*—And, if we are thus really conscious to ourselves of such an unfeigned affection, let it be our daily joy, that he who implanted this Divine principle in our hearts, discerns and sees it there; and, *knowing all things*, he perfectly *knows this*, however we may be suspected, however we may be censured. 17

Let us learn also by what method we are to express *our love*, according to our ability and opportunity; even by *feeding his sheep* 16

[f] *We know that his testimony is true.*] *Grotius* would argue from the *plural number* in these words (*Annot. in* John xx. 30), that *this last chapter* was not written by John himself, but was added to *his gospel* by some other hands. (See *note* a on John xxi. 1. p. 471.) But it is plainly said in the beginning of *this verse*, that it was he *who testified and wrote these things*; and besides, that we have frequent instances of the like *change of numbers* (see Rom. vii. 14, and 1 Thess. ii. 18), it is evident from the words, *I suppose*, in the *next verse*, that only *one person* speaks. So that no more appears to be intended here than if he had said, "We universally allow, that what is *testified* by a credible eye-witness, and asserted by him *under his hand*, must be admitted as a valid testimony, and pass for unexceptionable evidence: this is the case here; and therefore regard it accordingly."

SECT. CCI.

sheep, and promoting the interest and edification of his church. Let *ministers* especially do it; and let them not forget those dear creatures, *the lambs* of the flock. *Jesus* the compassionate *Shepherd*, as we see, did not forget them; but taught his servants with the greatest tenderness both by his precepts, and by his example, to *gather them in* their *arms, and carry them in their bosom.* (Isa. xl. 11.)

Ver. 15

21 Happy are those *ministers* who, instead of indulging a vain *curiosity* in things wherein they are not at all, or but very little concerned, are spending their lives in such faithful services; *feeding the flock of God*; and *taking the oversight of it, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind*; that *when the chief Shepherd shall appear, they may receive an unfading crown of glory:* (1 Pet. v. 2, 4.) *A crown* which will infinitely more than repay, not only their *labours*, but their *sufferings* too!

18 Happy *Peter*, who, having worn out his better years in the service of *Christ*, courageously *stretched out* his aged arms to be *bound*, and, being *borne away* to tortures and death, shed the last slow ebb of his blood as a *martyr* for him *who had loved him and given himself for him.*—And not less happy *the beloved* disciple, so willing to hazard his life in the same cause; though he was not in fact called to lay it down as a *martyr!* Our gracious *Lord*, who sees every purpose, and every affection, as it rises in the heart, favourably *accepts of the willing mind*, and will, through the riches of his grace, entitle *them* to the reward of equal suffering, who have waited with a like readiness, though they have not been called out to the severity of the like trial.

20—23

SECT. CCII.

Christ appears to the whole body of the disciples at the appointed mountain in Galilee; and afterwards meets the apostles several times at Jerusalem, and discourses with them concerning the affairs of his kingdom. Mat. XXVIII. 16, *to the end.* Mark XVI. 15—18. Luke XXIV. 44—49. Acts I.—2, 3.

MAT. XXVIII. 16.

SECT. CCII.

NOW, quickly after the late interview which Jesus had with his disciples at Jerusalem, *the eleven disciples went into Galilee, to a* certain *mountain* not far from the sea of Tiberias, *where Jesus had appointed* to meet *them.* "And he appeared to them, and above five hundred brethren at once, who came together from all parts of the country on that important occasion."

Mat. XXVIII 16

MAT. XXVIII. 16.

THEN the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

And

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

And having seen him, they bowed down and *worshipped him;* and *though some* of the company *had doubted* at first, yet they were afterwards fully convinced[a]. "And the greater part of them continued alive, as witnesses of the truth of his resurrection for several years after[b]; though others of them died in a short time, and went to their glorified and triumphant Lord in heaven." See 1 Cor. xv. 6. Thus did he manifest himself in Galilee to a considerable number of his disciples at once; and after that, he appeared to James[c], and then (as we shall see hereafter) to all the apostles." See 1 Cor. xv. 7.

SECT. CCII.

Mat. XXVIII. 17

But, though he shewed himself thus openly to his disciples, "he did not publicly appear at any time to all the people; nor indeed did he shew himself, in any other instance, to so large an assembly even of his own disciples: but in the several appearances he made he chiefly conversed with the apostles, and confined his visits to those witnesses that were chosen before by God to attest the truth of his resurrection; who had frequent opportunities of a free conversation with him, and, as we have seen before (Luke xxiv. 30, 42, 43; and John xxi. 12, 13), did eat and drink with him

[a] *Though some* of the company *had doubted* at first, &c.] There is no room to think that this refers to *some of the apostles*, when Christ had so lately satisfied the most incredulous among them; but we are certainly to understand it (as Mr. *West* has fully shewn) of *some* that were *in company* with them, though Matthew has not mentioned them. (See *West's Observ.* p. 25, 29.) Yet still it is not easy to imagine how any of the *rest of this company* could continue to *doubt of* the truth of *Christ's resurrection*, when they actually *saw him*, and that *in the presence* of so many others; a circumstance incomparably more convincing to each than if he had appeared to any one alone. I therefore chose to *render* and *paraphrase* the words, οι δε εδιστασαν, as above. Those learned critics, *Albert (Observ.* p. 163, 164), and *Bos (Exercit.* p. 23), have produced many instances, in which οι is put for τινες. And all the difficulty is removed, if we allow a small *change in the tense*, and take the *rendering* of the *Prussian Testament, Even they who had before doubted;* or, which is much the same, *though some had doubted.*

[b] Several years after] It is generally granted that the *first Epistle to the Corinthians* was written at least *twenty years* after *Christ's resurrection;* and Paul there tells us, that *the greater part* of these *five hundred* then *continued alive.* And by the way it was a wise and gracious dispensation of Divine Providence to continue their lives so long, as each of them, wherever Providence led them, would be an authentic witness of that important fact, *the resurrection of our Lord*, the great fundamental of the Christian faith.

[c] After that he appeared to James.] It is probable this was James the *son of Alpheus*, who was still living when the apostle Paul wrote his *first epistle to the Corinthians*, whereas the other James, the *son of Zebedee*, had suffered martyrdom some years before. (Acts xii. 2.) But the circumstances of *this appearance* are no where recorded, nor have we any credible account *where* or *when* it happened; only we learn from the *order* in which it is placed by the apostle Paul, that it was *after Christ's appearance to the five hundred brethren.* See *note* b on Luke xxiv. 34, p. 464.

[d] And

SECT. CCII.

him after he rose from he dead." See Acts x. 41.

Acts I. 2. And at these times of his conversing with them[d], he more particularly opened to them what was the nature and design of their office; [*and*] *through the Holy Spirit*, which was given not by measure to himself, and which he had lately breathed into them, *he gave commandments* and instructions *to the apostles whom he had*

3 *chosen*, how they were to act: *To whom also he* gave abundant evidences of the truth of his resurrection, and *shewed himself* to be *alive after he had suffered* death, *by many infallible* proofs and *tokens; being seen of them* at various times *for* the space of *forty days* after his resurrection, *and speaking* to them *of the things which related to the kingdom of God.*

Luke XXIV. 44 And these his last interviews with them were chiefly at Jerusalem, to which they returned soon after his appearance to them on the mountain in Galilee; *and Jesus* also *came* thither, *and* made them repeated visits: and on one of these occasions, he *spake unto them, saying*[e], *These* [*are*] *the words which I spake to you*, and these the intimations that I often gave you, *while I was yet* dwelling *among you, that all the things must be* exactly *fulfilled which are written* in the scriptures *concerning me*, both *in* the pentateuch which is called *the law of Moses, and in the* books of the succeeding *prophets, and in the Psalms* and other poetical books of the Old Testament.

45 And *at the same time he* not only in words expounded to them the sense of the sacred writers, but also by a secret operation on their intellectual faculties *opened their minds, that they might understand the scriptures* in their reference to

46 him. And in a most convincing manner he enlarged

Acts I. 2.—[*And*] through the Holy Ghost [he gave] commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen;

3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Luke XXIV. 44. And [Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying], These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the Psalms, concerning me. [Mat. XXVIII. 18.—]

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

46 And said unto them,

[d] And at these times of his conversing with them.] As I have inserted in the first paragraph of *this section* what is said in the *first epistle to the Corinthians*, of *our Lord's appearance* to the *five hundred brethren*, and to James, so I have thought it proper to introduce in this and the *next section* what relates to *this story* in the beginning of the Acts (chap. i.—2—12), which renders the narration more complete, and finishes the account which the *sacred writers* give us of the *history of our Lord* to the time of his *ascension*.

[e] On one of these occasions he *spake*, &c.] I use this indeterminate form of expression, because I see no mark by which we can particularly ascertain *the time* when the following discourse was delivered; only, I think it very plain it must be *after their return to Jerusalem* (see Luke xxiv. 49), and consequently a very few days *before our Lord's ascension*. —I have thrown all that the *three evangelists* say of these discourses into one *continued discourse*, though perhaps some of them might be delivered at different times.

them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

MAT. XXVIII.—18. All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

LUKE XXIV. 48. And ye are witnesses of these things.

enlarged upon the important subject, *and said to them*, When you consider all these things, you must certainly perceive, *that thus it was written, and thus it was necessary*, in conformity to the counsel of God, and for the manifestation of his glory, *that the Messiah should suffer; and should rise again from the dead*, as I have done, *on the third day*: *And that*, in consequence of this, and on this great foundation, the important doctrines of *repentance and forgiveness of sins* through faith in him *should be preached in his name*, and by his authority, *to all* the *nations* of the earth, *beginning* first *at Jerusalem* itself, though polluted with the blood of the Prince of life [f].

SECT. CCII.

Luke XXIV. 46

47

You know indeed (added he) how cruelly the Jews have treated me, and how ungratefully they have rejected me; but their outrageous malice has now done its utmost, and my heavenly Father has not only rescued me from their hands but is exalting me to all that height of dignity and glory which the sacred oracles have so pathetically described; for *all authority is* now *given unto me*, both *in heaven and on earth*, and, in accomplishment of what was promised to the Messiah, I am raised to a kingdom which comprehends both the upper and the lower worlds, and entitles me to the homage of angels as well as of men. *And* yet, though I could so easily command the ministry of those more glorious creatures, it suits best with the scheme of my gospel to make use of *you;* who *shall* accordingly *be wisnesses of* all *these things*, by publishing the certain knowledge that you have of the important truths of my death and resurrection [g]; and

Mat. XXVIII 18

Luke XXIV. 48

[f] *Beginning at Jerusalem.*] As for the *grammatical construction* of the Greek word ἀρξάμενον, it would be foreign from the design of these *notes* to enter into it farther than to refer the learned reader to *Elsner (Observ.* Vol. I. p. 288. and *Raphelius (Annot. ex. Herod.* p. 276, 277.) and to the *original* of Luke xxiii. 5. xxiv. 27. and Acts x. 37.—It was both *graciously* and *wisely* appointed by *our Lord*, that the *gospel* should *begin* to be preached at Jerusalem; *graciously*, as it encouraged the repentance of the greatest sinners, when they saw that even the *murderers of* Christ were not exempted from the offers of gospel mercy; and *wisely*, as hereby Christianity was more abundantly attested, the facts being published just on the spot where they happened; and as the vast concourse of people of various nations, present there at the *feast of pentecost*, would contribute greatly to its more speedy spread.

[g] *You shall be witnesses of these things.*] That this was the grand business of the *apostles*, is evident; and the ingenious author of *Miscellanea Sacra (Essay* iii. p.17—23.) has taken great pains to shew how the title of *witnesses* and the office of *testifying* is in the sacred writings appropriated to the *apostles*. But after all, though it was indeed essential to the *apostolic office*, that they who bore it should be able to testify the facts as of their own personal knowledge; yet it is certain, that a great many others,

SECT. CCII.

and who are therefore to look upon it as the great business of your lives to spread the notices and evidences of these facts. *And*, that you may be fully qualified for so high an office,

Luke XXIV. 49 *behold*, *I* am shortly to *send upon you the* great *promise of my Father*, relating to the miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit upon you. (Compare Joel ii. 28. and Acts ii. 16, 17.) And as the Divine Wisdom sees fit to honour this place, sinful as it is, with the first view of this surprising appearance, I charge you not to go from hence before you have received those gifts and graces you shall be furnished with for the discharge of your ministry; *but do you continue* here *in the city of Jerusalem till you are invested with* this *power from on high* [h]; whereby you will be enabled to bear your testimony in so advantageous and convincing a manner, that no falsehood or sophistry will be able finally to stand before you.

49 And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Mark XVI. 15. *And* further *he said to them*, When you shall thus be furnished with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, *go forth into all* parts of *the world*, *and preach the gospel to every* human *creature* under heaven to whom Providence may lead

16 you, whether Jew or Gentile: And take care that you deliver it with becoming seriousness; and let them see to it that they receive it with proportionable regard; for it is a matter of infinite importance. And accordingly I now solemnly declare, That *he who* sincerely *believes* your testimony, *and*, in token of that cordial faith, *is baptized* in my name, and continues to maintain a temper and conduct suitable to that engagement, *shall* certainly *be saved* with a complete and everlasting salvation; *but he who believeth not* this my gospel, when opened with such

MARK XVI. 15. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not, shall be damned.

others, who were not *apostles*, were able to testify the same; and it was their duty, and no doubt their care to do it, as Providence gave them an opportunity; and the *apostles* had many *other duties* incumbent upon them for the edification of the church, and in order to the performance of them were furnished with *extraordinary gifts* and *powers*, for which they would have had little occasion had it been *their only business* to *testify these facts*.

h *Continue in the city of Jerusalem till you are invested*, &c.] This passage utterly overthrows Mr. Whiston's assertion, that all this discourse was delivered on the *night* Christ rose from the dead; and that the *ascension* related by Luke in the conclusion of *this chapter*, is not *that* at the end of *forty days*, when he quitted this earth, to return to it no more, but a *previous ascension* which was made on the *resurrection-day*. For nothing can be more certain, than that the *apostles* did *quit* Jerusalem between Christ's *resurrection* and the *descent of the Spirit*, and *went into* Galilee by Christ's appointment, which was signified to them by the *angel* and by *himself* too.

i When

such convincing evidence[i], and finally persits in wilful impenitence and unbelief, as he rejects the most gracious counsel of God for his recovery, *shall be condemned*, by his righteous judgment, to future and everlasting punishment[k], and shall to his dreadful experience find that gospel which he has despised to be a savour of death to him. SECT. CCII. Mark XVI 16.

MAT. XXVIII. 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Observe then the extent of your commission; and *go forth therefore*, not only into Judea, but into all the rest of the world, *and proselyte all the nations* of the earth to the faith and obedience of my gospel[l], *baptizing them in the* awful and venerable *name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*[m]; that by this solemn Mat. XXVIII 19

[i] When opened with such convincing evidence.] This is by no means a proper place to inquire into the *proportion* between the *evidence* which was peculiar to the days of the *apostles*, and *that* which is common to our own. But I hope it will be considered, on the one hand, how improbable it is, that a *Divine revelation*, introduced as the *gospel* was, should ever be left so destitute of proofs in after-ages, that an honest man, after impartial consideration, might reject it; and on the other, how fit it was, that the danger of neglecting it should be strongly declared, lest it should seem itself to have left men at liberty to trifle with it.

[k] *Shall be condemned*, &c.] As for the objection which has been urged against the truth of Christianity, from the *damnatory sentence* which it here and elsewhere pronounces on those that reject it, I have considered it at large, since the former publication of *this volume*, and attempted to shew that it is so far from being conclusive, that it would rather have been a greater difficulty in the scheme of Christianity if it had contained no such sentence. See my *second letter* to the Author of *Christianity not founded on Argument*. And I must earnestly entreat any reader, who fancies there is any force in what the *deists* urge on this head, attentively to consider what is there offered, before he presume on the contrary sentiment, which may perhaps be an error as *fatal*, as it is *absurd*.

[l] *Proselyte all the nations* of the earth.] The whole tenor of the succeeding books of the *New Testament* shews that Christ designed by this *commission* that the *gospel* should be preached to *all mankind* without exception, not only to the Jews, but to all the idolatrous Gentiles: but the prejudices of the *apostles* led them at first to mistake the sense, and to imagine that it referred only to their going to preach the *gospel* to the Jews among all nations, or to those who should be willing to become Jews.—I render the word μαθητευσατε, *proselyte*, that it may be duly distinguished from διδασκοντες, *teaching* (in the *next verse*,) with which *our version* confounds it. The *former* seems to import instruction in the essentials of religion, which it was necessary *adult persons* should know and submit to, before they could regularly be admitted to *baptism*; the *latter* may relate to those more particular admonitions in regard to Christian faith and practice, which were to be built upon that foundation. It is certain, that no argument can be drawn from hence to the prejudice of *infant-baptism*; for had Christ sent out these *missionaries* to propagate *Judaism* in the world, he might have used the same language; "Go, and proselyte all nations, circumcising them in the name of the God of Israel, and teaching them to observe all that Moses commanded."

[m] *Baptizing them in the name of the Father*, &c.] Though I dare not assert that the use of *these very words* is essential to *Christian baptism*, yet surely the expression must intimate the necessity of some *distinct regard* to each of the *sacred three*, which is always to be maintained in the administration of this ordinance; and consequently it must imply, that more was said to those of whose *baptism* we read in the Acts, than is there recorded, before they were admitted to it. The *Christian Church* in succeeding ages has acted a wise and safe part in *retaining these words*; and they contain so strong an intimation, that *each* of these *persons* is properly *God*, and that worship is to be paid, and glory ascribed to *each*, that I cannot but hope they will be a means of maintaining the belief of the one, and the practise of the other,

SECT. CCII.

solemn initiatory ordinance they may profess their subjection to each of these Divine persons, and, maintaining suitable regards to each, may receive from each correspondent blessings: And see that you instruct the converts whom you so baptize, *teaching them to* keep and *observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*; as remembering that I am their Lord, and you only the messengers of my will. *And*, while you act in pursuance of these directions, though numberless difficulties will appear in your way, yet be not discouraged at them; for *behold, I am always with you*, to support and comfort you, and in some measure at least to succeed your labours; and I will to such purposes as these be with all my faithful ministers who shall succeed you in the work, *even to the end of the world* n. *Amen!* O blessed Jesus, so may it indeed be! And may this important promise be fulfilled to us and to our successors, to the remotest ages, in its full extent o.

Mat. XXVIII 20

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mark XVI. 17.

And he yet farther added, So far as it is necessary and expedient for the confirmation of my gospel, and the establishment of my cause and interest in the world, a miraculous power shall attend you, and others who shall join with you or succeed you in the first plantation of my church; and in particular, *these signs*, and others no less wonderful, *shall follow them that believe*, and be performed by those who in a lively manner exercise their faith in God, when he is inwardly exciting them to such operations p: *in my name they shall cast out* the most obstinate and mischievous *demons* who may have

MARK XVI. 17. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues.

other, among the generality of Christians to the end of the world.

n *I am always with you, even to the end of the world.*] As *Christ's presence* with his surviving *apostles* and other *ministers* was as necessary *after* the destruction of Jerusalem as *before it*, nothing seems more unreasonable than to limit these words by such an interpretation, as to refer them only to that period: nor does it indeed appear that *the end of the world*, is ever used in any other than the most extensive sense.

o *Amen!* — so may it indeed be!] Though the word *Amen*, with which each of the *gospels* ends, seems chiefly to have been intended as an intimation of the *conclusion* of the book, and as an asseveration of the certain *truth* of the things contained in it; yet I think the turn here given to it in Matthew very natural, considering its connection with that *promise*, which was undoubtedly the greatest strength and joy of that good man's heart. St. John uses the like turn in more express language, in the *last verse but one* of the *Revelation*. *Surely I am come quickly: Amen! Even so, come Lord Jesus!*

p *These signs shall follow them that believe*, &c.] It is exceeding evident, that the word *believe*, in this place, must signify something different from *that faith* which had in the *preceding verse* of Mark been required as indispensably necessary to salvation; and can have no other rational interpretation than what is here given.

q *They*

have possessed the bodies of men; *they shall* by an extraordinary, and hitherto unknown, effusion of my Spirit, be enabled with the greatest fluency and propriety to *speak in* various *new languages* which they have never learnt; *They shall take up serpents* without being bitten or endangered by them [q]: *and if*, by some secret or open attempt made to destroy them, *they drink any deadly* and malignant *poison, it shall not hurt them* [r]; [*and*] when *they shall lay* [*their*] *hands on the sick* and infirm, it shall be attended with a healing virtue, *and they shall* immediately *recover* without the use of any farther means. So that in consequence of this extraordinary confirmation, my gospel shall meet with a very general reception, and my heavenly Father, according to his promise, "shall give me the heathen for mine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for my possession." (See Psal. ii. 8.)

Mark XVI. 17, 18

18 They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Such was the purport of our Lord's discourse, and in this manner he conversed with his disciples till his ascension, with the account of which illustrious fact we shall conclude this important history of his life.

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH how ill a grace could the *Jews* complain of any deficiency in the evidence of *our Lord's resurrection*, when he appeared *alive* to so great a number as *five hundred at once!* How *glad* must these *disciples* be *when they saw the Lord!* and with what pleasure must they hear him *speaking of those things which concerned the kingdom of God!*

Mat. xxviii. 16

Acts i. 3.

We

q *They shall take up serpents.*] *Jamblicus* (*Vit. Pythag.* cap. 28) says that Pythagoras could do this; and very credible writers have asserted, that in the eastern nations there is an art of *charming snakes and serpents* by the force of music, so as for a while to suspend their disposition to hurt. (See *Bochart. Hierozoic.* part 2. lib. iii. cap. 6. and compare Psalm lviii. 4, 5. and Eccles. x. 11.)—But *this power* was undoubtedly exerted without any such artifice and included (as in the case of Paul, Acts xxviii. 3—5.) an ability to heal the most dangerous wounds given by the bite of the most noxious animals.

r *If* by some secret or open attempt made to destroy them, *they drink*, &c.] I add *this clause*, that none may imagine God ever intended that these *miraculous powers* should be used merely for *ostentation*, or to gratify the *curiosity* of spectators. Considering to what degrees of cursed refinement the art of *poisoning* was by this time brought, as well as how frequently *execution* was done, by *giving poison* to condemned persons in the age and country in which the *apostles* lived, such a *promise* as this will appear more important than the reader might at first apprehend.

SECT. CCII.

We have surely perpetual reason for thankfulness, when we think of that *commission* which *Christ* gave to his *disciples:* nor is it a circumstance of little importance, that they had it in charge,
Luke xxiv. 47 when they published this message of grace, to *begin at Jerusalem;* though the religious opportunities that were abused by that ungrateful city had already been so great, and their provocations so many. Amazing condescension of the *Prince of Peace*, that he sent his *ambassadors of peace* to them when they had hardly laid aside the weapons with which they had slain him, and were scarce rested after the cruel fatigue which their officious malice had given them in abetting his murder! Behold, he offers them all the invaluable blessings purchased by his *blood*, while it was yet, as we may say, warm upon *mount Calvary!* and on the same principles, even unto this day, *where sin hath abounded*, there *is grace abounding much more.* (Rom. v. 20.)

The *commission* he gave his *apostles*, though it *began at Jerusalem*, did not end there; nor was it confined within the narrow limits of *Judea;* but they were appointed to *go into all the world,*
Mark xvi. 15. *and preach the gospel to every creature.* We to this day, in our remote land, enjoy the benefit of it. Let us remember the important consequences that will one way or another attend the
16 *gospel* thus brought us. *If we believe* it, *we shall be saved; but if we believe* it *not, we shall be damned.* Life, or death, O my soul, is the certain issue of it, with regard to *thee* in particular. *Be surety to thy servant, O Lord, for good* (Psal. cxix. 122.) and *let my life be precious in thy sight!*

Luke xxiv. 45 *Christ opened the understanding of the apostles*, to apprehend the sense of *scripture.* Let us study that *sacred book* with an humble dependence upon the aid of that *blessed Spirit* by whom it was dictated. And let these *apostles* who were thus divinely taught, be reverently regarded as our *surest guides*, when we are studying the *oracles* of the *Old Testament;* considering the extraordinary *commission* with which *Christ* sent them forth, the *power from on*
49 *high* with which he *invested* them, and the ample *credentials* which he thereby gave them.

Mat. xxviii. 20 These *miraculous donations* are now ceased, but that valuable promise still continues in force, That *he will be with* his ministers *always, even unto the end of the world.* In the strength of that gracious assurance, O thou *faithful and true Witness*, would thine humble *ambassadors* still go forth to all the labours and difficulties before them: *remember thy word unto thy servants* (Psal. cxix. 49.) and *may it be unto us according to it!* Amen!

SECT.

SECT. CCIII.

Christ, after his last discourse with his disciples, ascends to heaven in their sight, from the mount of Olives in the neighbourhood of Bethany; and they joyfully return to Jerusalem, waiting for the Spirit. Mark XVI. 19, *to the end.* Luke XXIV. 50, *to the end.* John XX. 30, *to the end.* XXI. *ult.* Acts I. 4—12.

ACTS I. 4.

AND being assembled together with them, [he] commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.

ACTS I. 4.

SECT. CCIII.

SUCH was the conversation Jesus had with his disciples at Jerusalem, and such the commission he gave them: *and* now at length, *having gathered them together* on the fortieth day after his resurrection, *he charged them* again, as he had done before (Luke xxiv. 49, p. 484), *not to depart from Jerusalem*, to employ themselves in any secular cares at home; *but* rather *to* spend some succeeding days in extraordinary devotion in the temple, or in their secret retirements; that they might, with the most becoming temper, *wait for the* accomplishment of that *promise of the Father, which, [said he] you have* again and again *heard from me*, both before and since my resurrection. (Compare John xiv. 26. xv. 26. xvi. 7. and Luke xxiv. 49.) *For John indeed baptized with water*, when he was sent to call men to repentance; *but* you well know, that he declared at the same time, "there was one coming after him, who should baptize in a more glorious manner with the Holy Spirit:" (see Mat. iii. 11, Vol. VI. p. 103,) And in accomplishment of this prediction, as you now are to be sent forth to preach the gospel, and to bear witness of me as the true Messiah, that whosoever shall believe in me may obtain remission of sins, *you* shall be plentifully furnished from above with all those graces that may enable you to fulfil your ministry, and by my means *shall be baptized with* an extraordinary effusion of *the Holy Spirit;* and this shall be done *not many days hence.*

Acts I. 4.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence.

5

LUKE XXIV. 50. —And he led them out as far as to Bethany.

And he then took them with him out of the city, and passing over the brook Kedron again, in a very different manner from that in which he had lately crossed it (John xviii. 1, p. 342), *he led them out* to the mount of Olives, and brought them through that ridge of hills, *as far as to* the boundaries of *Bethany*[a].

Luke XXIV. 50

a *As far as to* the boundaries of Bethany.] This at least must be the import of the word *ως*; but what is said elsewhere will not allow us to extend it to *the town* itself: for

SECT. cciii.

Acts I. 6.

When therefore they were come together with such peculiar solemnity, and Jesus had thus assembled them in a body (as they apprehended, on some extraordinary occasion) *they asked him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time,* when they have just been guilty of such aggravated wickedness, *restore the kingdom to Israel?* And wilt thou now in such a manner shew thy favour to a nation which so well deserves to be destroyed, that Israel shall at this time be raised from its servitude, to that extensive empire which ancient prophecies have led us to expect under the government of the Messiah?

Acts I. 6. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7 *But,* as Jesus was not willing to enter on a subject, concerning which the Spirit would soon rectify their notions, *he* chose to check their curiosity, *and said to them,* whatever the schemes of providence may be, *it is not for you to know,* and therefore is not proper for you to inquire, what are *those times or seasons which the Father has placed under his own authority:* the Messiah's kingdom shall indeed be triumphant, and the Israel of God shall reign with him; but where, or when, or how this shall be, it is not your present business to inquire: And therefore now let not these secret things engage and take up your attention; *but* let me rather exhort you to mind your present duty, and to leave the event of things to God: and, to prepare you for the important service you are called to, *you shall* indeed, as I before have told you, *receive the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon you; and* by this means you *shall be* qualified to be *my witnesses, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth;* and you shall gather in subjects to my kingdom in the remotest regions, and subdue multitudes to the obedience of faith.

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

And

for the town of Bethany was *about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem* (John xi. 18.) whereas the place from which *our Lord* ascended, on mount Olivet, was but *a sabbath-day's journey,* or about *half that distance* from Jerusalem (Acts i. 12.) So that to reconcile what Luke here tells us in his *gospel* with the account he gives of *our Lord's ascension* in the Acts, we must conclude, that *he conducted his disciples* only *to the boundaries of Bethany,* which came much nearer to Jerusalem, and took in part of the mount of Olives. (See *note* a on Mat. xxi. 1, p. 154.)—It is indeed possible, that *our Lord* might make his last visit on earth to Lazarus and his pious sisters; but it is manifest he did not *ascend* from the town of Bethany, where many others must have seen him, but from the mount of Olives, where none beheld him but his *his own disciples;* nor is there any intimation in the words of the *evangelist,* that he came from Bethany to the mount of Olives on the day of his *ascension,* but rather that he went directly from Jerusalem thither.

b *While*

SECT. cciii.

Luke XXIV.

LUKE XXIV.—50. And he lift up his hands, and blessed them.

And then, *lifting up his hands* in a most solemn and devout manner, *he blessed them*, as one that had authority, not only to desire, but to command a blessing on them; and recommended them to the guardianship and care of his heavenly Father, to whom, after so long an abode on earth, he was now returning. 50

51—And it came to pass [after the Lord had spoken [ACTS, these things] unto them], while he blessed them, he was parted from them. [MARK XVI. 19.—ACTS I. 9.—]

And it came to pass, after the Lord had spoken these things unto them, and had with great affection and solemnity discoursed with his disciples of the work they were to do, and of the power they should have to qualify them for it, even *while he was blessing them, he was* miraculously *separated from them.* 51

ACTS I.—9. And while they beheld, he was taken up, [LUKE, and carried up into heaven,] and a cloud received him out of their sight, [and *he* sat on the right-hand of God.] [MARK XVI. —19. LUKE XXIV. —51.]

And while they stedfastly *beheld* him, and fixed their eyes upon him with the strictest observation, *he was taken up* from the ground on which he stood, *and* gradually *carried up into heaven*[b], as it seemed by the ministry of attending angels (though he could certainly have ascended merely by his own power): *and* while he hovered in the air, at some distance from them, *a* bright *cloud* appeared, as a kind of triumphant chariot which God had prepared on this great occasion, and *received him out of their sight: and*, passing through crowds of adoring angels, *he* ascended to a throne highly exalted above all theirs, and *sat* down, even *at the right-hand of God*, on a seat of the highest dignity and authority, there to reign in the glories of his mediatorial kingdom, till all things shall be put under his feet. (See 1 Cor. XV. 25, 27.] Acts I. 9.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

And as they were stedfastly looking up to heaven, while he went on in his amazing and triumphant progress, *behold, two* angels, in the form of *men, in white* and shining *raiment*, being of the number of those whose ministration God was pleased to make use of in this illustrious event, came and *stood near them; Who also* spake to them, and *said, Ye men of Galilee, why do ye stand gazing up to heaven* with such great astonishment? Is it not what your Lord himself has often told you, that he was soon to return 10 11

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same

b *While they beheld, he was taken up*, &c.] It will, I hope, be remembered, that it was for *majesty*, and not of *necessity*, that *our Lord* used the ministration of *angels* in carrying himself to heaven.—Dr. *Jennings* has observed, with his usual sagacity and propriety (*Serm. at Berry-street*, Vol. I. p. 373), that it was much more proper *our Lord* should *ascend to heaven* in the sight of his *apostles*, than that he should *rise from the dead* in their sight: for *his resurrection* was proved, when they saw him *alive after his passion*; but they could not *see him in heaven*, while they continued upon earth.

SECT. CCIII.

return to the glory from which he came? And we are now sent hither to assure you, that *this Jesus, who is* thus *taken up from you into heaven, shall so come* again, *in the* very *same manner as you have* now *beheld him go into heaven:* for the great day shall surely come, when he will visibly descend from heaven in a cloud of glory, attended as now with a guard of angels, to dispense their final judgment to all the inhabitants of the world: but in the mean time, the heavens must receive him, and you must no more expect his company on earth.

Acts I. 11. same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Luke XXIV. 52 *And* his disciples were so fully satisfied of his Divine power and glory, that *they worshipped him* with the humblest reverence, though he was now become invisible to them; *and then* (as he had ordered them) *returned to Jerusalem with great joy from the mount called Olivet,* where he was parted from them); *which is* but *a sabbath-day's journey,* or about a mile distant *from Jerusalem*[c]: and it exceedingly rejoiced their hearts to think that Jesus their Lord was in this singular manner honoured by his heavenly Father, and received up into a state of everlasting felicity and glory, in which he would be able to protect all his followers, and to provide in the most effectual manner for their present and eternal happiness. *And they were always in the temple,* that is, they constantly attended there at proper times, and were daily present at the hours of prayer[d], *praising and blessing God,* both in his

LUKE XXIV. 52. And they worshipped him, and [then] returned to Jerusalem, with great joy [from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath-day's journey:] [ACTS I. 12.]

53 And were continually in the temple, praising

c *Which is a sabbath-day's journey from Jerusalem.*] *A sabbath-day's journey* is generally reckoned by the Jews to be *two thousand cubits*; which was the distance between the *ark* and the *camp*, when they marched (Josh. iii. 4); and probably the same proportion was observed when they rested. This is usually computed at *about eight furlongs*, or *a mile*. But as the *camp* took in a large extent of ground, and this was only the distance of those that encamped nearest to the *ark*; so it is evident, that as all the people were to repair on the sabbath-day to the place of God's public worship, *a sabbath-day's journey* was more than *two thousand cubits* to those whose station in the *camp* was more remote from the *ark*: yet when they were afterwards settled in *towns*, they allowed no more than *two thousand cubits* for a *sabbath-day's journey*. (See *Selden, de Jur. Nat. & Gent.* lib. iii. cap. 9, and *Lightfoot, Hor. Hebr.* on Luke xxiv. 50; and Acts i. 12.) Compare *note* a in this *section*, on Luke xxiv. 50.

d *And they were always in the temple.*] Some have imagined (by comparing this with Acts i. 13, 14), that the *apostles* dwelt for some time afterwards in an *upper-chamber* of the *temple*: but they had no such interest with the *priests*, as to allow us to suppose they would permit them to lodge in an *apartment* of the *temple*. It is sufficient that they were *always* there at the *proper seasons*; for it is well known, that by night the *temple* was shut up. (Compare Luke ii. 37, Vol. VI. p. 74, and John xviii. 20, Vol VII. p. 368.) They probably joined their voices with the *chorus* of the Levites, as no doubt other pious Israelites did; and must surely, from what they had already seen and known, have learnt to use many of the psalms sung by them, in a much sublimer sense than the generality of the people could.

e *The*

praising and blessing God. Amen.

his house, and in their own retirements. *Amen!* May God always be praised by us, and by all who receive his gospel, for the discoveries and attestations of it given to these his servants, and by them to us! SECT. CCIII. Luke XXIV. 53

MARK XVI. 20. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

And, in a few days after this (as will be shewn more largely in the following history), their ascended Lord, in remembrance of his promise to them, sent down as a royal donative the extraordinary influences of his Spirit upon them, fully to qualify them for that important office to which they were designed. *And going forth* with this furniture, *they preached* the gospel *every where* throughout the whole Roman empire, and even among the barbarous nations, with amazing success; *the Lord*, according to his promise, *working with them, and confirming the word* of his grace *by the signs* and miracles *which followed* it; which were at once the most solid, as well as the most obvious and popular demonstrations of those Divine truths which they delivered. *Amen!* So may the presence of the Lord be always with his faithful ministers! and may his gospel be attended every where with efficacy and success, as well as with convincing evidences of its Divine authority! Mark XVI. 20.

JOHN XXI. 25.—And there are also many other things which Jesus did; [and many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book;] the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. [JOHN XX. 30.]

And thus we have given a summary account of the most remarkable passages of the life of Christ during the time of his abode on earth: but after all, it must be considered only as a specimen, rather than a full narration; for *there are also many other things that Jesus* said and *did, and indeed many other signs* and miracles, that *Jesus wrought*, both before and after his resurrection, *in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book* of the four evangelists, which is here completed; and *which* indeed are so numerous, that *if every one* [*of them*] *should be recorded* in all its circumstances, *I am persuaded* the work would amount to so vast a bulk, that *the world itself would not* be able to *receive the books that should be written;* but the very size of the volumes would necessarily prevent the generality of mankind from procuring or reading them[e]. *But these* most necessary and important John XXI. 25.

JOHN XX. 30. But these

[e] *The world itself would not* be able to *receive the books*, &c.] There would be no great inconvenience in allowing an *hyperbole* here, as most *expositors* do, of which we meet with other instances in *scripture:* (see Gen. xi. 4; Numb. xiii. 33; and compare John xii. 19.) But I think the sense given in the *paraphrase* easier and

SECT. CCIII.

tant *things are written*, in this plain way, and in this portable volume, not merely that the reader may be amused by so curious a story, but that the faith, the hope, and the piety of Christians, may be confirmed; and especially *that you may* more firmly and assuredly *believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God*, partaking of the same Divine glory with the Father, and the sure object of his people's confidence; *and that believing* it, *you may* be so influenced by his instructive discourses, his complete example, and his dying love, that you may *have* eternal *life through his name*. And may God grant, that as it is all most certainly and circumstantially true, so it may have that happy effect upon all those by whom this history is perused, from age to age! *Amen.*

John XX. 30.

these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name. [Amen.] [JOHN XXI.—25.]

IMPROVEMENT.

THUS did our victorious *Saviour ascend on high, and lead captivity captive: the chariots of God* which attended him were *twenty thousand, even thousands of angels!* (Psal. lxviii. 17, 18): and being *gone into heaven*, he *is* there seated *on the right-hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject to him;* (1 Pet. iii. 22.) Let us his humble followers *look after him* with holy joy and pleasing expectation; congratulating his triumphs, and trusting through his grace to share them.

Luke xxiv. 51.

Acts i. 9. 10

Like the *apostles*, let us *bow down and worship him;* and while we continue here below, let us make it our daily labour and care to *seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right-hand of God:* (Col. iii. 1.) And, instead of amusing ourselves with the vain dreams of temporal grandeur and felicity, or with curious inquiries after those *times and seasons which the Father has reserved in his own power*, let us apply with vigour and zeal to that business which he has assigned us; labouring to the utmost to promote his *gospel*, and, by a diligent improvement of

Luke xxiv. 52.

Acts i. 7.

and more suited to the remarkable plainness of St. John's style. *Elsner* explains this passage, as if the *evangelist* had said, "If they were all to be particularly written, the unbelieving world would not *admit them*, so as to be moved by them to faith and obedience." And he produces instances in which χωρεῖν has such a signification. But, as John knew the unbelieving world would reject even what he had writ, this could be no reason for his writing no more.—Perhaps it may be a most delightful part of the entertainment of the heavenly world, to learn from our blessed Lord himself, or from those who conversed with him on earth, a multitude of such particulars of his life, as will be well worthy our everlasting admiration. In the mean time, the pious and attentive study of what is here recorded, may most happily prepare us for such discoveries, and add an unutterable relish to them: *Amen!* So may it be, to the *author* of *this Exposition*, and to all those who do, or may peruse it!

of our time and opportunities, to prepare for his *final appearance*, when *the Lord himself shall descend from heaven* with more public splendour than he returned thither, and shall come in *the glory of his Father, and his own glory*, with a majestic pomp which *every eye shall see*, and with the *sound of a trumpet*, which even all the nations of the *dead shall hear*. SECT. CCIII. Ver. 11

In the mean time, let us thankfully own his gracious *presence with his disciples*, whom he left behind him; and with admiring gratitude reflect upon the happy consequences of that *presence*, in the establishment of the *gospel* in the world, and the transmission of it even unto us, in so remote an age and country. Mark xvi. 20

Let us especially praise him for these *sacred records* which contain such an authentic and exact account of those important facts in which we are all so nearly concerned; *records* incomparably more valuable than the *writings* of our private estates, or the *charters* of our public liberties. Let us earnestly pray, that their great design may be answered in us; and make it our importunate request to Him who is the *giver of all grace*, that through the operations of that *Holy Spirit*, without the influence of which even *scripture itself*, with all our advantages for understanding and improving it, will be but *a sealed book*, or *a dead letter*, our faith may be nourished and confirmed by every portion of it which we read; and that our hearts may be so delivered into the mould of his word, that *believing on Christ*, under all the characters he bears, we *may have life through his name;* and may at length *receive the end of our faith, in the* complete *salvation of our souls*, through him, to whom with the *Father*, and the eternal *Spirit*, be undivided honours, and everlasting praises. *Amen*, and *Amen!* John xxi. 25 John xx. 31

THE

THE ACTS OF THE HOLY APOSTLES,

WRITTEN BY ST. LUKE.

SECT. I.

St. Luke connects this history with his gospel, by a more particular account of the ascension of Christ than he had there given. Acts I. 1—12.

Acts I. 1.

SECT. I. Acts I. 1.

THE former treatise, which *I* lately *composed*[a], and inscribed to thee, *O Theophilus*, contained a faithful narrative, as far as might be necessary for the confirmation of a Christian convert, *concerning all* the most considerable *things which Jesus began both to do and to teach*[b], and gave an account of the manner in which

Acts I. 1.

THE former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

[a] *The former treatise I composed.*] This *former treatise* is undoubtedly *the Gospel*, which was written by St. Luke, and dedicated by him to Theophilus: and, as this history of the Acts was written by the *same person*, it is allowed by all antiquity, the author of it was St. Luke, whom the apostle Paul styles *the beloved physician*, (Col. iv. 14) and speaks of as *his fellow-labourer*, (Philem. ver. 24.) who was *with him* at Rome, when he wrote his epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, and again afterwards when he wrote his *Second Epistle to Timothy*; (2 Tim. iv. 11) and so continued *an associate* and *companion* to the apostle Paul, as it is evident, from his manner of expression, *the penman* of the Acts had been, in several of his travels, and in his dangerous voyage when he went first to Rome. This book is generally thought to have been written about the *year of our Lord* 63, at which time the history ends, which it is reasonable to suppose would have proceeded further, if it had been written later: and probably, as Mr. L'Enfant and others have observed, it made as it were *a second Part of St. Luke's Gospel*, which in all copies has the *author's name* prefixed, while *this* is left *without a title* in the oldest *manuscripts*; though in the *Syriac Version* it is expressly ascribed to Luke, whom the translator seems to call *his master*.—— Not to mention the supposed allusions to this book in Barnabas, Clemens Romanus, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, it is certain that Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Origen, and Eusebius, bear the most express testimonies to the *genuineness of it*, in a multitude of passages, which I need not here insert, as they are produced at large by Dr. Benson, in the *first Part* of the *Appendix* to his *History of the Plantation of Christianity*, Vol. II. p. 295—310; and, since the publication of that, by Mr. Biscoe, in his learned *Discourses at Boyle's Lectures*, chap. xiv. xv. where he has shewn in a most convincing manner, how capable these ancient writers were of judging in this matter, and how universally it was owned by the Christians of the first ages as *a sacred book*. How incontestably it demonstrates *the truth of Christianity*, is shewn at large in both these useful treatises, and every attentive reader must needs observe it for himself.

[b] *Began both to do and to teach*] To begin to do a thing, as Heinsius and many other critics have observed, is a common Greek *idiom* for *doing* or *undertaking a thing*. Compare Mat. xii. 1; with Luke vi. 1; and Mark vi. 2; with Mat. xiii. 54. See also Gen. ii. 3; Septuag. Numb. xxv. 1; Judg.

which Christ opened the gospel, and in which he confirmed it, from his first appearance on earth to the last period of his abode upon it; *Even to the very day in which he was taken up* into heaven again, *after he had by* the influence and assistance of *the Holy Spirit*[c], with which he himself was so abundantly anointed, *given a* proper *charge to the apostles, whom he had chosen* to be the prime ministers of his kingdom, and the great instruments of extending it in the world: *To whom also,* in order to fit them more completely for the discharge of their important office, *he presented himself alive after his sufferings, with many* most *evident testimonials* of the truth of his resurrection; while, though he declined appearing publicly among the Jews, he often shewed himself to his disciples, *being seen by them* at various times *for* no less than *forty days, and speaking* to them *of the things concerning the kingdom of God,* which was then shortly to be erected by their means.

And, on the fortieth day after his resurrection, *having assembled them together* with peculiar solemnity[d], *he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem* directly[e], though he was now to

CHAP. I. Acts I. 2.

2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen.

3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem,

Judg. xiii. 5; xx. 31; Luke iii. 8; xxi. 28; and Acts ii. 4. Yet in most of these places it refers to some of the *first actions* or events of the kind. Accordingly I apprehend, with Chrysostom, that the phrase here refers to the account which Luke had given of Christ's ministry, *from the beginning* and *first rise of it,* (as he speaks, Luke i. 2, 3,) to the *ascension,* with which he concludes his Gospel.

c *By the Holy Spirit.*] It is certainly much more agreeable to the order and construction of the words in the *original,* to connect and explain them as above, than to refer them, as the *Syriac* and *Ethiopic Versions* do, to his *choosing the apostles by the Spirit,* or with Elsner, *(Observ.* Vol. I. p. 353,) to his *being taken up by it.* It is no wonder, considering how short a history we have of what passed between Christ's resurrection and ascension, that *this* should be *the only place* which speaks of his *acting by the Spirit* after he rose from the dead: nor can I, with a late learned and ingenious writer, think *that* a sufficient reason for adhering to the *versions* mentioned above. (See Benson's *Plantation of Christianity,* Vol. I. p. 14, 15.) His *breathing on the apostles, and saying, Receive ye the Holy Spirit; (John* xx. 22;) seems also to agree very well with this interpretation. To render it, *the orders they were to execute by the Holy Spirit,* (as in the *Translation* of 1727,) is altogether arbitary, and is substituting a quite different truth instead of what was written by Luke.——I have before inserted the remaining *verses* of *this section* in the two last *sections,* to complete the *History of our Lord* to the time of his *ascension:* (See note d, sect. ccii). But notwithstanding this it will be easily excused, that I have not omitted them *here* in their proper place, that the whole History of the Acts might stand together, and the work be kept entire.

d *Having assembled them together.*] Though some considerable ancient as well as modern critics, and particularly Chrysostom, and Theophylact, understand the word συναλιζομενος as expressive of Christ's *eating with his apostles* during the *forty days* spoken of above; the Notes of Elsner, *(Observ.* Vol. I. p. 355,) and Raphelius, *(ex Xen.* p. 146, *et Herod.* p. 320, *& seq.)* seem abundantly sufficient to justify the *version* here given.

e *Not to depart from Jerusalem.*] This seems a plain intimation, that, after *our Lord* had met his disciples in Galilee, he appointed the *apostles* to meet him at Jerusalem,

SECT. I.

to stay no longer with them, and they knew of no immediate business which they had there; *but* ordered them to *wait* there *for the* accomplishment of that *promise of the Father*, to send the Spirit *which* [*said he*[t],] *you have* so often, and so lately *heard from me.* (See John xiv. 26. xv. 26. xvi. 7. and Luke xxiv. 49.) *For John indeed baptized with water* only, when he was sent to call men to repentance; *but*, as he then declared, (Mat. iii. 11,) there is a nobler baptism you may expect from me; and to prepare and furnish you for the great work to which I have commissioned you, of preaching repentance and remission of sins in my name, *you shall be baptized with* an abundant effusion of *the Holy Spirit*, far beyond what you have ever yet received: And this, I assure you, shall be done *within these few days;* which proved by the event to be but ten.

rusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.

Acts I. 4.

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence.

6 But now, as the appointed time was come for his returning to the Father, Jesus withdrew with his apostles from the city, and led them out, as was observed before, unto the mount of Olives, as far as to the boundaries of Bethany. (See Luke xxiv. 50.) *They therefore being come together*, full of expectation that he had brought them thither with a view to some remarkable transaction, *asked him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time* break the Roman yoke from our necks, and after all this confusion *restore the kingdom to* the ungrateful people of *Israel*[s], who have been thus shamefully abusing

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

rusalem, or perhaps accompanied them thither, and spent *his last days* on earth *there;* doing this last honour to the place, where God had chosen to dwell, and where the most solemn ordinances of his worship were administered.

[t] *Said he.*] These words, though omitted in the *original*, are plainly implied. Raphelius (*ex Xen.* p. 146, 147.) has produced many examples of such *a change in the person speaking* in the best Greek *writers.* Many others occur in the *sacred authors.* Compare Luke v. 14. Acts xvii. 3. xxiii. 22. Gen. xxvi. 7. Deut. ii. 13. See also Psal. ii. 3, 6. and xci. 14. And I the rather mention it, as it may account for many prophecies of Christ in the *Old Testament*, where he is introduced as *speaking on a sudden*, in an abrupt manner; which is *not so usual*, especially in *modern* and *western Writers.*

[s] *Restore the kingdom to Israel.*] They seem to have expected, that, when *the Spirit* was in so extraordinary a manner *poured out*, and *the world*, according to Christ's prediction, (John xvi. 8.) *convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*, the whole nation of the Jews would own him for the Messiah, and so not only shake off its subjection to the Romans, but itself rise to very extensive, and perhaps universal dominion. The word αποκαθιστανεις intimates *the shattered* and *weakened state*, in which Israel now was. And I cannot but think, *our Lord's answer* may intimate, it should *at length be restored*, though *not immediately*, or with all the circumstances they imagined; which concession seems the most satisfactory answer to Rabbi Isaac's objection against Christianity, from his mistaken sense of these words. *Chissuck Emunah*, Part II. p. 59.

abusing and crucifying thee? Is the empire of the Messiah immediately to be erected? and wilt thou begin it from Jerusalem; a place that, of all upon the face of the earth, seems to be the least worthy of such a distinguished honour? SECT. i. Acts I. 6.

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

But he, waving a direct answer to this curious question, and leaving it to the Spirit, which was shortly to be given, to rectify the mistaken notions on which they proceeded in it, only *said to them*, Cease your inquiries at present on this head: since *it is not* convenient *for you* now *to know those times or seasons* in *which* many remarkable prophecies concerning my kingdom shall be fulfilled: For *the Father has reserved* them *in his own power*, under his own direction and disposal, and hath not expressly determined them in those predictions which certify the events themselves. And he hath taken this precaution, on purpose that the minds of his people might be kept in an humble, dependent, resigned frame: It will therefore be your wisdom always to cultivate such a temper, applying yourselves diligently to the duties of your office, and leaving all events to be determined by his infinite wisdom and goodness. *But* for the present let it suffice you to be told, that ere long, though I say not exactly when, *you shall receive* an extraordinary *power of the Holy Spirit coming upon you; and* in consequence of that, *shall* be abundantly qualified to *be my witnesses both in* the city of *Jerusalem, and in all* the land of *Judea; and* not only so, but *in Samaria* too, though you have never yet addressed yourselves to the Samaritans in any former mission, (see Mat. x. 5. and compare Acts viii. 5, 14, 25.) *and even to the remotest parts of the earth;* the barbarous nations of which you shall visit, with a success which shall gloriously illustrate my Father's promise, of "giving me the heathen for mine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for my possession." (See Psalm ii. 8.)

8 But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

And having said these things, he lifted up his hands and blessed them; (Luke xxiv. 50.) and *while they beheld* him with great earnestness, and high expectation of some extraordinary event consequent on this solemn preparation, *he was lifted up* from the ground in a miraculous manner, *and* rose gradually higher and higher, till at length *a* bright *cloud*, conducted by the

SECT. i.

ministry of angels, who joyfully attended their returning Lord, *received him out of their sight*, and they saw him no more.

Acts I. 10. This marvellous event was so astonishing to the apostles, that they continued with their eyes fixed the way that he was gone: *And while they were stedfastly looking up to heaven*, after him, *as he went on* in his triumphant ascent, *behold*, *two* angels, in the form of *men*, *in white* and shining *raiment*, came and *stood near them*;

10 And while they looked stedfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 *Who also* spake to them, and *said*, *Ye men of Galilee, why do ye stand* thus *gazing up to heaven*, with so much surprize and amazement? *This Jesus, who is* now *taken up from you into heaven*, is gone to that world from whence he came, and in which he is to make his final abode: Nevertheless there will be a time, when he *shall* visit your earth once more, and *so come* in a visible form, riding on a cloud as his triumphant chariot, and attended by angelic guards, *in the same manner as you have* now *beheld him going into heaven*: Depart therefore in peace, and pursue the interest of his kingdom, with a firm assurance that his cause shall prosper amidst all opposition, and that while you are engaged in the service of this ascended triumphant Lord, you can never be losers by your fidelity and your zeal.

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

12 *Then* were the hearts of the apostles filled with joy by what they had seen and heard; and having worshipped their ascended Lord, (Luke xxiv. 52.) *they returned to Jerusalem*, *from the mount called Olivet*, *which is* but *a sabbath-day's journey*, or about a mile distant *from Jerusalem* [b]. And there they employed themselves in a daily course of public and private devotion; rejoicing in what they had seen, and firmly believing some extraordinary event was at hand, whereby they should be more fully qualified for the great work assigned them; which, whatever the hazard of it might be, they were firmly determined to undertake and prosecute.

12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem, from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath-day's journey.

IMPROVE-

b *A sabbath-day's journey from Jerusalem.*] For the extent of *a sabbath-day's journey*, see Luke xxiv. 52. *note* c. The easiest manner of reconciling this text with Luke xxiv. 50. and John xi. 18. may be seen in the *note* on the former of those passages, sect. cciii. note a. And it is with pleasure that I see it confirmed and illustrated by the learned Mr. Biscoe, in his *Sermons at Boyle's Lecture*, p. 391—394. An elaborate and valuable work; by referring to which I shall have an opportunity of saving myself and the reader a great deal of trouble in these notes; for which therefore I gladly take this opportunity of making my acknowledgment to the worthy author.

IMPROVEMENT.

If we have ever seriously considered the contents of *this excellent history* on which we are now entering, we must surely see abundant reason to adore that gracious Providence which hath transmitted it to us, to confirm our faith, and animate our hope in the *gospel.* The account of *our Lord's ascension*, with which it begins, relates to a fact of so great importance, that we may well bear *the repetition* of what we have read concerning it in the *former history.* SECT. i. Ver. 1, 2, 9

We see the apostles still dreaming of a *temporal kingdom* to be *restored to Israel:* So hard is it for the best of men to be entirely *crucified to the world*, even *by the cross of Christ!* (Gal. vi. 24.) *Our Lord* does not set himself at large, to combat *that error*; nor is it necessary that *we* should be *eagerly solicitous* on the like occasions, where *mistakes* do not affect men's characters, or their eternal state. Prudently does he direct them to *wave* the indulgence of *their curiosity.* Let us learn to *moderate ours*, and refer *times and seasons* to him *who hath reserved them in his own power.* Let a sense of the perfect wisdom and goodness of the Divine Being *silence* and *compose us*, amidst all the darkness which veils our prospects of futurity. 6 7

With the *apostles* let us *look up* after *an ascending Saviour*, and send our wishes and our souls *to heaven*; where he *now is*, and where he must *remain*, till that important *day* in which he shall *descend* to the final judgment. *Behold, he* then *cometh in the clouds, and every eye shall see him!* (Rev. i. 7.) May we view him *to our joy*, and not *to our terror!* and *lift up our heads* with a serenity and chearfulness, becoming those who see *the approach* of their complete *redemption!* (Luke xxi. 28.) In the mean time, may *his cause* and *service* be ever *dear to us!* and while he is attending to *our concerns* in the world above, may we with grateful and joyful alacrity, *pursue that* which he graciously condescends to own as *his interest* here upon earth. 10 11

SECT. II.

The apostles being returned to Jerusalem, and assembled with the rest of the disciples, Matthias is chosen to succeed Judas in the apostolic office. Acts I. 13. *to the end.*

Acts I. 13.
AND when they were come in, they went

Acts I. 13.
NOW the apostles being returned from the mount of Olives to Jerusalem, immediately after the ascension of Christ, as was observed SECT. ii. Acts I. 13.

SECT. ii.

served in the conclusion of the former section; *when they were entered* [*into the city*] *they* presently retired for devotion, and *went up into an upper room*[a], where they usually held their assemblies. And as this was the place *where* the apostles commonly *abode*, all the eleven were there, *both Peter, and James, and John and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James*, [*the son*] *of Alpheus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas*, or Jude, [*the brother*] *of James*[b]. But Judas the traitor was now dead, as was observed towards the close of the preceding history: (sect. cxciii.) and the vacancy occasioned by his death gave rise to that important business to which they quickly proceeded.

Acts i. 13.

went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James *the son* of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* of James.

14 *These all unanimously persevered in prayer and supplication*, with great intenseness and ardor of soul, together *with the* pious *women*, who were formerly mentioned as attending the cross of their Lord, *and* particularly *Mary*, so celebrated as *the mother of Jesus: and* also *with his brethren* and near kinsmen after the flesh, of whom there were some other besides the apostles whose prejudices, though once strong, were now happily worn off. (Compare John vii. 5.)

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

15 *And in these days*, while they were waiting for the promise of the spirit *Peter rising up in the midst* of a full assembly *of the disciples, spake* as follows: *Now the number of persons*[c] that were met *together* in that place, *was about an hundred and twenty*; the greater part of the five hundred to whom Christ had appeared, (1 Cor. xv. 6.) continuing in Galilee, during this interval between the feast of the passover and that of pentecost. And he said,

15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty.)

16 O ye *men* that hear me this day, [*and*] whom I regard as my *brethren*, in the bonds of religion,

16 Men *and* brethren,

a *Into an upper room.*] I can see no sufficient reason for saying, as many have done, that this was *in the temple*. (Compare *note* d, on Luke xxiv. 53.) Epiphanius says, it was *on mount Sion*, and that a *Christian Church* was afterwards erected on the spot of ground on which it stood. (See Hammond *in loc.*) Perhaps they might the rather choose it, as giving some advantage for *looking to the temple* But it is plain from many other passages, that *upper rooms* were often *large*, and fit for containing a considerable number of persons. (Compare Mark xiv. 15. and Acts xx. 8.) See *Bos. Exercit.* p. 64, & *seq.*

b *The brother of James.*] The expression in the *original* is ambiguous, and may signify either *son* or *brother*: But Jude himself expressly determines it, that he was *his brother*, in ver. 1. of his *epistle*.

c *Number of persons.*] It is literally *the number of names*; but it is well known that ονομαζα often signifies *persons*; (See Rev. iii. 4. xi. 13. and *Raphel. ex Polyb.* p. 297.) And it best suits the English language, to render it so.

d *This*

then, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

gion, as well as of friendship! *it was necessary* in the righteous judgment of God, that *this* awful passage of *scripture should be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spake*, long *before* the event, *by the mouth of David*[d], and which God intended *with* a particular *regard to Judas; who* was so wicked a wretch, that, in contempt of all the most solemn and endearing obligations to distinguishing duty and fidelity to his Divine Master, he *became the guide of those that seized* on the blessed *Jesus*, and marked him out to them by a traitorous kiss. (Mat. xxvi. 47, 48.)

SECT. ii.

Acts I. 16.

17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

And indeed he well deserved to be made a monument of vengeance to succeeding ages, considering the near relation in which he stood to Christ, and to us; *for he was* once *numbered with us* his apostles, *and* for a while *had obtained part of this ministry*, with which our Lord was pleased to honour us, as the principal officers in his kingdom. 17

18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and

The calamitous end of *this* unhappy *man* is *therefore* fresh in your memories; and it is known to all of you, that instead of enriching himself by his crimes, and securing those worldly advantages he so eagerly pursued, he only *purchased* (that is, was the occasion of purchasing) *a field*[e] *with* that money, which 18

was

[d] *This scripture should be fulfilled*, &c.] Two prophecies are afterwards quoted for this purpose, (ver. 20.) from Psal. lxix. 25. and cix. 8. and it has been matter of much debate, whether they do in their *original sense* refer to Judas, or to *the enemies* of David. Mr. Jeffery (in his *Review*, p. 179, *& seq.*) maintains the former, and Dr. Sykes (*on the truth of Christianity*, p. 271, 272.) the latter. It is certain, the *sixty-ninth psalm* is not to be confined to Judas; for St. Paul (Rom. xi. 9, 10) has quoted the 22d and 23d verses of it, as applicable to the unbelieving Jews in general. There are so many passages in *both the psalms* in question, more applicable to David than to Christ, that I was very inclinable to render the words before us, *The Scripture which the Holy Ghost spake before by the mouth of David, must necessarily have been fulfilled concerning Judas*, &c. and to have explained them as if the *apostle* had said, "That vengeance, which David foretold as to be executed on *his enemies*, must much more fall on Judas, whose perfidious and cruel attack on Christ himself rendered him so much more criminal." But it is certain, *the order* of the Greek words will not so naturally admit this; nor do I remember to have seen the phrase προεφητευσε περι τινος, the particle επι, or εν, with the *dative case*, being much more proper in that connection. (Comp. Mat. xiii. 14. and Luke xxii. 37.) I therefore conclude, that, while David prophesied of the calamities which should befal *his persecutors*, it was revealed to him by the *Holy Spirit*, that the *enemies* and *murderers* of the Messiah should inherit *those curses* in all their terror, and be yet *more miserable* than the persons on whom they were more immediately to fall. This fact (in itself exceeding probable) I take to be *asserted in these words*, as what was revealed by the *same spirit* to the apostle *Peter*. And I hope, the reader will excuse the length of *a note*, which may serve as *a key* to many other passages of the *New Testament*.

[e] *Purchased a field.*] It is worth observing, that an action is sometimes said in *Scripture* to be *done by a person*, who was *the occasion of doing it*. (Compare Gen. xlii. 38. Exod. xxiii. 8. 1 Kings xiv. 16. Isa. vi. 10. Jer. xxxviii. 23. Rom. xiv. 15. 1 Cor. vii. 16. and 1 Tim. iv. 16.) But some would render εκτησατο, *he possessed the field*, supposing Judas was *buried there*. (See Bren. and Heins. *in loc.*) Dr. Lightfoot

SECT. ii.

was *the reward of* his *iniquity:* For his conscience would not suffer him to keep it; but he threw it down, as you know, in the temple, and then going away he hanged himself. (Mat. xxvii. 5.) But that which should have supported the weight of his body breaking, he could not fully execute his horrid design; *and falling down on his face, he burst asunder in the middle*[f], *and all his bowels were* in a miserable manner *poured out* upon the ground; so that he expired in the utmost agonies both of body and mind, to the horror of all that beheld him.

Acts i. 18. and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

19 *(And* by the way, this was a fact so public and notorious, that *it was known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem*[g], who could not but take notice of such an extraordinary circumstance; *so that that field* which was so purchased *is* to this day *called in their language,* which is the Syriac dialect, *Aceldama, that is, The field of blood,* as being bought with money which was, in more senses than one, the price of blood; having been the cursed hire for which Judas sold the blood of his master, and in effect his own.)

19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called, in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

20 Now, said Peter to the disciples, I observed to you, that the scripture speaks something of this remarkable event; *for it is written in the book of Psalms,* (Psal. lxix. 25.) "*Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man inhabit it:*" *and* again, (Psal. cix. 8.) "*Let another take* (that is, another shall take and discharge) *his office.*" The former of these clauses is already awfully verified, as he is become such a spectacle

20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and, His bishopric let another take.

foot thinks, he was *strangled in the air* by the Devil, and *thrown down headlong* in this *field;* and so might be said to *possess it,* and occasioned its being called *the Field of blood.* (Hor. Heb. on Mat. xxvii. 5, and *in loc.*)

[f] *Falling down on his face, he burst asunder,* &c.] Thus Matthew's account is reconciled with Luke's above. (See *note*[b] on Mat. xxvii. 5.) I find the learned Casaubon has taken the same method; nor can I see any reason to recede from this interpretation, on the most attentive review of the *various solutions* proposed by Mr. Biscoe; (Boyle's *Lect.* p. 637—644.) But, were I to change it, I should prefer to any other that of Limborch; that some Jew, who would have concealed the suicide, *cut Judas down,* and threw him into some pit or valley, where he was afterwards found *lying on his face,* with *his bowels gushed out.*—That πρηνης γενομενος should be rendered, not *falling headlong,* but *falling down on his face,* see proved by Raphelius, *(ex Polyb.* p. 103, *& seq.)* and Elsner, *(Observ.* Vol. I. p. 358, 359.)

[g] *It was known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*] Aringhius (in his Rom. *Subterran.* p. 436.) mentions *a funeral inscription* dug up in the *Via Nomentana,* by which it appears, that *the fate of* Judas became a proverbial *form of cursing.*—The reader will perceive, that with many of the best *critics* I take *this verse* to be a *parenthesis,* to be considered, not as the words of Peter, but of the *historian;* which effectually answers the *objection* from the fact having happened *but a few days* before the speech was delivered. This also accounts for his calling the *Syriac,* which was spoken by the Jews at that time, *their language,* for חקל דמא is the Syriac dialect.

[h] *One*

tacle of horror, that men will detest the very place where he lived; and the other must be now accomplished. *It is necessary therefore, that of the men who have conversed* intimately *with us*, and have attended *during all the time in which the Lord Jesus was going in and coming out among us*, and so can testify of all he did and said, *Beginning from the baptism of John*, when he first entered on his ministry, *even to the day in which he was taken up from us* into heaven, *one of these should* be chosen to the apostolic office, to *be made a witness with us*[h] *of* that great and fundamental fact, *his resurrection* from the dead, upon which the proof of his being the Messiah so evidently rests.

SECT. ii.

Acts I. 21.

21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

The apostle had no sooner spoke, but immediately the whole assembly assented to the reasonableness of this proposal; *and* accordingly *they set up two men;* the one, *Joseph called Barsabas*[i], *who was* also *surnamed Justus*, on account of the remarkable openness and integrity of his temper; *and* the other, a person of no less eminent note for his piety, who was called *Matthias.*

23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus and Matthias.

And they prayed with great solemnity, answerable to the importance of the occasion, *saying, Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all*, and perfectly discernest every secret sentiment of the soul, and all the future circumstances of life! we humbly intreat thee to *shew, which of these two*, whom we esteem thy faithful servants, *thou hast chosen* to be advanced to this distinguished honour; *That he may take part of this ministry, and* share with thine other servants in the *apostleship, from which Judas is fallen by* [*his*] *transgression* to his eternal ruin; *that he might go to his own place*[k], to that miserable world, which

24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

[h] *One of these should be made a witness with us.*] They might reasonably and modestly conclude, that it was fit *the number of apostles* which Christ first chose should be kept up, perhaps in allusion to the *twelve tribes* of Israel. But it is impossible, as well as quite unnecessary, that we should at this distance of time be able to assign a reason, why the *two* that are afterwards mentioned, and no more, were proposed as *candidates*. Perhaps a longer and more intimate acquaintance with *our Lord* might entitle them to a preference on this occasion.

[i] *Joseph called Barsabas.*] The Cambridge *Manuscript* reads *Barnabas;* but Dr. Benson seems to have assigned solid reasons for concluding, this was not Barnabas the Cyprian, (Acts iv. 36.) of whom we read so often in this history, whose name was also *Joses*, or *Joseph*, (which are both the same) but rather the *Joseph* mentioned Mat. xxvii. 56. and Mark vi. 3, the son of Cleopas or Alpheus, and brother to at least *two* of the apostles, James the Less, and Jude.

[k] *To his own place.*] Oecumenius, Hammond, and Le Cene, seem to interpret *this phrase* very unnaturally, when they explain it of *a successor going into the place of Judas.*

That

SECT. ii.

which in thy righteous judgment is appointed for the reception of such heinous offenders, and the due punishment of such enormous crimes.

Acts I. 25.

26 *And* after this prayer *they gave out their lots* for each[1]; *and the lot fell upon Matthias*, on which they concluded, that he was the person whom God had appointed: *And* the rest of the apostles accordingly gave him the right hand of fellowship, so that for the future *he was numbered with the eleven apostles*[m], and made the twelfth of that venerable society of men.

26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 13, 14 It was wisely and well determined by the *apostles*, to spend this interval of time in *devotion* and in *Christian converse*; for never have we more reason to expect *the communication of the Holy Spirit* of God to us, than when we are sharing our time between the one and the other, so far as Providence affords us leisure 15 from our secular affairs. With their *devotions* they prôperly joined *a care* for the future *edification of the church*, and therefore *chose another apostle*, to complete *the number* which *our Lord* had appointed.

25 It is dreadful to think how *the vacancy* happened, and by what a horrible *transgression* it was, that one of the sacred society *fell from his office*. The hand of God's righteous vengeance was 17, 19 heavy upon him, and brought him in a few hours to *public infamy* and irrecoverable *destruction*. So that his *example*, dreadful as it is, shews us at once that no *dignity of office* can secure men from sin, and that when they break through the solemn bonds of a remarkably *high* and *eminent profession*, they must expect *a punishment* proportionably signal.

Riches

That ἴδιον τοπον signifies *a place proper* and *suitable* for such a wretch, and therefore by God's righteous judgment *appointed for him*, many writers have shewn, and particularly Dr. Benson, in his *History of the first Planting of Christianity*, p. 23. (Compare Mat. xxvi. 24. John vi. 70, 71, and xvii. 12.)

[1] *They gave out their lots.*] This was, no doubt, most impartially adjusted, though we know not in what particular method. The honour God has conferred on *inquiries by lot*, (Josh. vii. 14, 15. 1 Sam. x. 20, 21.) and the custom of fixing *the officers of the priests* in the temple, while in waiting there, *by lot*, (1 Chron. xxiv. 5, 7. and Luke i. 9.) might lead them to this turn of thought. Grotius has shewn in his *note* here, that such a designation to *sacred offices* prevailed also among some pagan nations.

[m] *Matthias——was numbered with the eleven apostles.*] Though Nathaniel and Matthias both signify *the gift of God*, I cannot think, that this will prove them, (as some have supposed) *the same person*. Nor can I see, that the question of *the right of choosing church-officers* can receive much light from so singular a story, in which *so peculiar an act of God* was expected.

Riches profit not in the day of wrath: (Prov. xi. 4.) The time is swiftly approaching, when *ill-gotten gain* will prove a burthen and a terror, and *the wages of unrighteousness* will appear as *the price of an Aceldama, a field of blood;* even in that dreadful day when impenitent sinners *go to their own place;* to those abodes of misery, which are so properly prepared for them, and so justly assigned to them; *assigned* especially *to those* whose business (like that of Judas) it was, to *preach repentance* unto others, to *shew them their transgression,* and to warn them of *their danger* and who were more especially obliged to have inforced their admonitions and their precepts, by the peculiar lustre of their own examples. SECT. ii. 18 25

But *the badness of the man,* who in some instances may be advanced to bear *the most sacred office,* is not to be interpreted to the *disgrace* of *that office* itself. The *apostles* were careful to keep up *the honour of theirs,* by seeking out *a more proper person,* who might do his part towards *taking away the reproach* which Judas had brought upon it, and might approve himself a worthy *witness of the resurrection of Jesus,* on the knowledge of which depended the salvation of millions. After all, they *refer the matter* to the determination of *Providence,* to which they make a very instructive appeal. Let us always remember the universal and intimate inspection of the Divine Being. *Thou Lord, knowest the hearts of all!* All their *treachery,* and all their *integrity,* is *manifest in thy sight:* And, in persons of *equal sincerity,* thou discernest what renders one *more fit* than another, for this or that situation and service! Let it be our desire to *follow Providence* ourselves; and let us *pray,* that God will set over all his churches *pastors after his own heart, who may feed them with knowledge and understanding.* (Jer. iii. 15.) 21--22 22 24

The lot is cast into the lap; but, casual as the determination may seem, *the whole disposal thereof is from the Lord.* (Prov. xvi. 33) Let us *own his hand* in the determination of *every circumstance* which befalls us, and especially in *those* by which any solemn and important trust may be committed to us: And may the consideration of it be an additional engagement upon us, to discharge it with becoming diligence and entire fidelity! 26

SECT. III.

The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost, with the former part of the speech which Peter made to the multitude on that great occasion. Acts II. 1—21.

Acts II. 1.

AND when the day of Pentecost was fully

Acts II. 1.

THE disciples of Jesus, after the choice of Matthias, employed their time in devotion, and

SECT. iii.

Acts II. 1.

SECT. iii.

and continued the same course of religious exercises as before, for several succeeding days.

fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Acts II. 1. *And when the day of Pentecost*[a] *was completely arrived*[b], that is, when the morning of the fiftieth day after the passover was come, it being then the first day of the week, the apostles with the rest of the hundred and twenty disciples were together; and *they were all* assembled *with* the most *unanimous affection in the same place*, in the upper room which was mentioned

2 before, where they had used to meet. *And on a sudden there was a* very extraordinary and surprising *sound from heaven as of a rushing violent wind*, which shook the very place, *and* came with such a mighty force, that *it filled all the*

3 *house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them* at the same time a number of *divided tongues*, made *as* it were *of fire*[c], i. e. bright

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as

a *The day of Pentecost.*] It has often been observed, that, as *our Lord* was *crucified* at one of the great Jewish *feasts*, it was fit that he should be *glorified* at another. And this of *Pentecost* was chosen with peculiar propriety, as next succeeding that of the *passover*, at which Christ suffered: and also, as it was celebrated in commemoration of the *giving the law* from mount Sinai on that day, (Exod. xix. 1, 11.) and as *the first fruits* were then *offered* and anointed, (Exod. xxiii. 16, and Lev. xxiii. 17.) To these answered the fuller discovery of *the Gospel* on this occasion, and the anointing *the first fruits* of the Christian *church* by the effusion of the *Spirit*: as Brennius has well observed. (See also *Miscell Sacra.* Essay I. p. 113—115.)——The solemnity of the *feast*, the general expectation of the Messiah that prevailed among them, and the *length of the days*, as it was about the *middle of summer*, would, no doubt, bring great numbers to Jerusalem at that time, who, when they returned home, and reported this great event, would naturally *make way* for greater regard to the *apostles*, when they came to the places where these people dwelt.

b *Was completely arrived.*] The first day of unleavened bread, that is, the *fifteenth* of Nisan, began this year on *Friday evening*; and this was *the day* on which they were to offer the *wave sheaf*: and from *the morrow after that day*, that is, from the *Saturday evening*, they were to count *seven weeks*, or forty-nine days, which would bring *the fiftieth*, that is, *the day of Pentecost*, then to begin on *Saturday evening*; so that on the *Lord's day morning*, it might properly be said to be *fully come*. See Lev. xxiii. 15, 16. The word συμπληρουσθαι cannot signify, that the day *was ended*, but that it *was fully come*. Compare Luke i. 57. ii. 21. and see *Beza in loc.*

c *Divided tongues as of fire.*] This wonderful appearance in the form of *fire*, might be intended to signify the *quickening* and *purifying influences* of the *Spirit*, as well as to illustrate John the Baptist's prediction, that Christ should *baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire*. (Mat. iii. 11, and Luke iii. 16.) But I will not venture to affirm with Mr. Fleming, (*Christol.* Vol. I. p. 324,) and Elsner, (*Observ.* Vol. I. p. 364,) that it was to signify, that the *Shekinah* (which appeared in a glorious *flame*, surrounded with a cloud,) was now passed from the Jews to the disciples of Jesus. The Jews (as Wolfius tells us,) have a tale among them, relating to the appearance of some *flashes of fire*, which fell on an assembly of *their doctors*, while they were studying the law; which probably was invented, to *slur*, or *imitate* this important history.——Bos (*Exercit.* p. 67) thinks, *each tongue* appeared *complete*, and that they are said to be *divided*, on account of the *distribution* that was made of one to each person. But it seems, that the *division of each* might aptly represent *the variety of languages*, with which each person was endowed; and some have thought that the form of the *mitres* worn by *bishops*, (according to the Roman ritual,) bears some allusion to the supposed form of these *cloven tongues*.——It is observed by Dr. Lightfoot and others, that as the *division of tongues* at Babel once introduced confusion, and was the means of *casting off the Gentiles* from the knowledge of the true God; so now there was a remedy provided by the *gift of tongues* at Zion, to bring the *Gentiles out of darkness into light*, and to *destroy*

as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

bright flames in a pyramidical form, which were so parted as to terminate in several points, and thereby to afford a proper emblem of the marvellous effect attending the appearance, by which they were endowed with a miraculous diversity of languages: *and it* was ordered so, that one of these tongues *rested upon each of them*[d], who were then present in the room.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

4 *And* as soon as ever these lambent flames appeared to touch them, *they were all* in a most sensible and extraordinary manner *filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues* than they had ever used or understood before, with light and fervour, and a most ready flow of language, according *as the Spirit gave them a power* and facility *of expressing themselves.*

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

5 *Now* as this happened at one of the three grand yearly feasts, and at that in which the days were longest, *there were sojourning in Jerusalem* at that time a great number of *pious men*, [*that were*] by their descent or by profession *Jews;* who were come thither out of all parts of the known world, *from every nation under heaven*[e] where any of that people dwelt, or any that were proselytes to the Jewish religion.

6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together

6 *And when this* strange *report came* to be noised *abroad*[f], as it presently did, *the multitude* soon ga-

stroy the veil which had been spread over all nations. (Isa. xxv. 7.) See *Lightf. Hor. Hebr.* and *Grot. in loc.*

d *Upon each of them.*] I agree with the learned Dr. Benson, (*Plant. of Christianity*, page 28, 29.) who thinks, (as Jerom and Chrysostom did,) that it is probable, *each* of the *hundred and twenty* shared in this miraculous donation. See also *Miscell. Sacra.* Essay I. p. 101, 102.) The *hundred and twenty*, mentioned chap. i. 15, are plainly referred to, ver. 1, as the persons here assembled: And as this would best illustrate *the pouring forth of the Spirit* on *the handmaids*, as well as on *the servants* of God, (ver. 18,) so it is certain, that the *manuscripts*, which would confine this effusion to *the apostles*, are of very small authority. Nor do Beza's arguments on the other side of the question appear to me by any means conclusive. Compare Acts x. 44—46 and xi. 15—17.

e *From every nation under heaven.*] Should this be taken for an *hyperbole*, we have other instances in *Scripture* of the like way of speaking; as where we read of *cities walled up to heaven*, (Deut. i. 28, ix. 1,) and of the dread of the Jews falling *upon every nation under the whole heaven.* (Deut. ii. 25.) See also Gen. xi. 4; Judg. xx. 16; and Psal. cvii. 26.——But not to insist upon it, that the Jews were then so numerous, as to have spread *through every country*, so that, as Agrippa in Josephus says, "There was not a people upon earth, who had not Jews inhabiting among them;" (*Bell. Jud. lib.* ii. *cap.* 16. § 4. p. 191. *Havercamp.*) the expression here can signify no more, than that there were some at Jerusalem at that time *from all the several nations* among whom the Jews were dispersed. See Lightfoot, and Whitby, *in loc.*) It would be very absurd to argue from hence, that there must be natives of Britain and America *at* Jerusalem, when this great event happened. And many arguments, drawn from such *universal phrases* elsewhere, seem as weak as this would be.

f *When this report came abroad.*] De Dieu concludes, this must signify *thunder*, which, he too confidently says, is always the import of קול and φωνη in the *Hellenistic* language, and argues from hence, that the *rushing wind* (ver. 2,) was attended with *thunder*. But the following clause, which refers

SECT. iii.

Acts II. 6.

gathered together, and were quite *confounded* and amazed: *For every one* of this various assembly *heard* one or another of *them*, as they addressed themselves by turns to people of a different language, *speaking* to each of them *in his own*
7 proper *dialect*. *And they were all astonished* at it beyond measure, *and wondered* at this marvellous event, *saying one to another*, *Behold*, how unaccountable is this! *Are not all these that speak*
8 by birth and country *Galileans? And how* then *do we every one* of us *hear* them, as they direct their speech to so many different people, who are here come together out of so many nations, speaking to each of us *in his own native language?*
9 For while there are among us *Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites* or Persians, *and those that inhabit Mesopotamia*[g], *and* those that dwell too in *Judea*, where the dialect is so different from that of Galilee; *and* likewise the natives of *Cappadocia* and *Pontus*, *and* of the country more
10 properly called the proconsular *Asia*; As well as the inhabitants of the neighbouring provinces of *Phrygia and Pamphylia*, of *Egypt and the parts of Africa which are about Cyrene, and the* many *sojourners* in this city [*who are*] *Romans*, some of us native *Jews*, *and* others of us *prose-*
11 *lytes* to the Mosaic religion[h]; Together with *those* of both these sorts who use the language *of Crete, and* those who are *Arabians; we* do every one of us *hear them speaking in our own* native *tongues*[i] *the wonderful works of God*, in the surprising testimonies he has given to the mission of Jesus who was lately crucified, not only by the miracles he wrought, but by his resurrection

ther, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

7 And they were all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

11 Cretes, and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

refers the assembly to the different *languages* spoken by those on whom the *Holy Spirit* fell, plainly shews, that it was not *thunder* which brought them together; which indeed could hardly occasion their assembly in one place.

g *Elamites, and those that inhabit Mesopotamia.*] Bishop Cumberland takes these to be the remainder of the Jews, who had been *carried captive* into Assyria, first by Tiglath-pileser, (2 Kings xv. 29) and afterwards by Shalmaneser, and placed in the *cities of the Medes*. (2 Kings xvii. 6.) See *Cumb. Orig. Gent.* page 225.

h *Romans, Jews, and proselytes.*] It appears from Josephus, Suetonius, Tacitus, the Roman *satirists*, and other writers of this age, in a variety of passages well known to the learned, that *great numbers* of Jews dwelt at Rome about this time, and made *many proselytes* to their religion. See Mr. Biscoe, at *Boyle's Lecture*, p. 85.

i *We hear them speaking in our own tongues.*] Cyprian, and Erasmus, and some later *critics* have thought, (particularly from ver. 8.) that the *miracle* was *not in the speakers* but *the hearers*; so that, while the *apostle* spake *his own native Syriac*, it would appear *Latin* to one, and *Greek* to another, &c. But this must be a mistake; for we read of *their speaking with tongues*, ver. 4. before any foreigners came in upon them. (Compare *chap.* x. 46. and 1 Cor. xiv. 2.) Nor could what they said, on this supposition, have appeared *a jargon* to any; which yet we find to have been the case, ver. 13. See Castalio, on ver. 4.

k *Filled*

surrection and ascension: And while they are discoursing of these marvellous events, they run through such a great variety of languages, which no one can suspect they have ever been taught, with so much readiness and propriety, as among the most learned of mankind is perfectly unequalled.

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

And they were all in a mixture of *amazement* 12
and perplexity, and said one to another, What can this unaccountable appearance possibly *mean?* Or what can it be designed to effect? *But* 13
others of them, and particularly those who were native Jews, and understood none of these foreign languages, hearing the sound of their words as a kind of barbarous jargon, derided them, and in a *mocking* and contemptuous manner *said, Surely these men* have begun the festival betimes, and *are* undoubtedly *filled with sweet* intoxicating *wine*[k], and therefore make this unintelligible noise.

13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lift up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

But Peter standing up with the eleven, who 14
were then in company with him, and who had each of them before been speaking in different languages, *raised his voice* so loud that those who had been reproaching them might hear it, *and said to them,* in the tongue that was commonly used among them, *O ye men of Judea, and* especially *all you that inhabit Jerusalem,* whom I would be solicitous in the first place to inform and convince, *let this be known unto you* as to the cause of this extraordinary appearance, *and listen to my words* with an attention becoming the importance of the occasion on which I speak.

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

For these men are not drunk, as you, who do not 15
understand them, rashly *suppose;* and it is indeed very uncharitable *for* you to imagine it, considering that *it is* now *but the third hour of the day*[l], that is, about nine o'clock in the morning, the hour of morning sacrifice; before which, you know, none, who have any regard for their character, will allow themselves so much as to taste wine, and much less to drink any

k *Filled with sweet wine.*] There was no *new wine*, or *must*, at the feast of *Pentecost*, as Beza and many others observe; but γλευκος properly signifies *sweet wine*. We are informed by Plutarch, that the ancients had ways of preserving their wine *sweet* a great while; and such wines were known to be very intoxicating.

l *The third hour of the day.*] Josephus tells us, that on *feast-days* the Jews seldom eat or drank till *noon*; (*de vitâ suâ*, § 54, p. 26, *Havercr.*) which if it were fact, would (as Grotius observes,) render this calumny the more incredible.—As to the computation of the Jewish *hours*, see sect. 6, note b, on Acts iii. 1.

SECT. iii.

any large quantity of it, whereby they would be rendered incapable of attending the service of the temple on such a solemn festival as this.

Acts II. 16. *But this* which has occasioned so much admiration, and which you know not how to account for, *is that* great event *which was spoken of by the prophet Joel*[m], chap. ii. 28—32. where it is written, "*And it shall come to pass in the last days*[n], or in the times of the Messiah, *saith* the ever blessed *God, I will pour out* an extraordinary effusion *of my Spirit upon all flesh*, that is, upon some of all ranks and orders, of all ages and nations of men: *And* as the wonderful effect of it, *your sons and your daughters shall prophesy*[o], *and your young men shall see* prophetic *visions, and your old men shall dream* significant and divinely inspired *dreams. Yea in these days I will*, in a most extraordinary manner, *pour out* the gifts *of my Spirit upon my servants, and* even *upon my handmaids; and they shall* also *prophesy*, and shall not only publish and proclaim the riches of my grace, but shall foretell the judgments that are coming upon those who shall continue hardened in their sins. *And* this effusion of my Spirit shall be followed with a most awful revolution; for *I will give* you to see *prodigies in heaven above, and signs upon the earth beneath*[p]; And such destructive

16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.

17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith God) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

18 And on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy;

19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and

[m] *By the prophet Joel.*] Some have explained this prophecy, as referring, in its original sense, to the *pouring forth the Spirit* on the Jews at their last general conversion; and think Peter's argument is, as if he had said, "You need not wonder at such an event as this, since so much more is at length to be expected." (See *Jeffery's True Grounds*, p. 120.) But from attending to the context I am led to conclude, for reasons too long to be here stated, that the prophecy is here applied in its most direct sense, and that the event of *this great day*, and the destruction of the Jews for rejecting a gospel so confirmed, were originally referred to in it.

[n] *In the last days.*] Every one knows, that *the last days* was a phrase commonly used to denote *the times of the Messiah*, when the *gospel* should be published, which is *the last dispensation* of divine grace: but here it seems to have a more particular view to the days immediately preceding the destruction of the Jewish nation, or *the last days of that people*, when the extraordinary means which were in vain employed for their conviction, would fully justify God in the severest vengeance he should execute upon that hardened people.

[o] *Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.*] Compare Acts xxi. 9. If this miracle had not been foretold, the argument for the truth of *Christianity* from it would, no doubt, have been conclusive; but, as it was referred to in the *Old Testament*, it might dispose the minds of the Jews still more readily to regard it, as it was indeed the more remarkable.

[p] *Prodigies in heaven above, and signs upon the earth beneath.*] This doubtless refers to the *prodigies* and *signs* which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem; (such as, the flaming sword hanging over the city, and the fiery comet pointing down upon it for a year; the light that shone upon the temple and the altar in the night, as if it had been noon day; the opening of the great and heavy gate of the temple without hands; the voice heard from the most holy place, *Let us depart from hence*; the admonition of Jesus the son of Ananus, crying

and fire, and vapour of smoke.

destructive wars shall arise, as a punishment for the wickedness of those who reject the mercy I offer, that there shall be *blood* shed in abundance, *and fire* scattered abroad to consume your cities *and* villages, so that *a cloud of smoke* shall ascend from the ruins of them. SECT. iii. Acts II. 19.

20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.

Yea, there shall be such confusion and misery, and all regular government both in church and state shall be so entirely dissolved, that *the sun shall* as it were *be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and illustrious day of the Lord* shall fully *come*, in which he will take ample vengeance on every unbeliever. 20

21 And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.

And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall, with humble submission to my method of saving grace in my Son, *invoke the name of the Lord, shall be saved*[q] from this terrible destruction, and brought into a state of security and happiness." 21

These premises the apostle Peter afterwards applied, to the conviction of those who had rejected and slain our Lord; and the argument wrought most powerfully upon them. But the prosecution and success of this address must be referred to the following sections.

IMPROVEMENT.

WITH how much attention and delight should we read the history of this glorious event, so frequently referred to in the predictions of *our Lord*, and of so great importance to the *Christian cause;* the miraculous *descent* of the *Holy Spirit!* He came down *as a mighty rushing wind*, to signify the powerful energy of his operations, whereby the whole world was to be shaken Ver. 2

crying for seven years together, *Woe, Woe, Woe!* the vision of contending armies in the air, and of intrenchments thrown up against a city there represented; the terrible thunderings and lightnings, and the dreadful earthquakes, which every one considered as portending some approaching evil: (All which by the singular providence of God are recorded by Josephus,) *Bell. Jud. lib.* vi. *cap.* 5 [al. vii. 12] § 3; & *lib.* iv. *cap.* 4 [al. 7] § 5,) in that *history* of his, the truth of which the emperor Titus attested under his own hand: (See *Joseph. Vit.* § 65, p. 33, *Haverc.)* And accordingly the greatest part of these circumstances are inserted in Tacitus, *(Hist. lib. v.: ap.* 13,) and happily preserved, though most of his account of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem be lost.

q *Whosoever shall invoke the name of the Lord*, &c.] This context being quoted thus was a strong intimation, that nothing but their *acceptance of the gospel* could secure them from impending ruin. Brennius has proved by an ample collection of *texts*, (in his *note* on this place,) that *calling on the name of the Lord* is often put for *the whole of religion:* And if it do not here directly signify *invoking Christ*, which is sometimes used to express *the whole Christian character*, (Compare Acts ix. 14, 21. xxii. 16. Rom. x. 12, 13. and 1 Cor. i. 2,) it must imply, that it is impossible for any who *reject him* to pray in an acceptable manner. How awful a reflection!

SECT. iii.

shaken. He fell upon them in *tongues of fire*, cloven or *divided* into several parts, to denote the most celebrated effect to be immediately produced, in causing them to *speak* with the utmost readiness and propriety, *languages* they had never learnt. An astonishing *miracle!* which was intended, not for pomp and ostentation, but to render them capable of *propagating the gospel* to the most *distant nations*, to which the grace of God had determined to send it.

Ver. 1 4 8—11

It is observable, that this divine gift fell upon them while they were *unanimously gathered together;* perhaps to intimate, that the influences of the Spirit are most to be expected where there is the greatest *unanimity*, and the greatest *devotion*. Thus did the blessed Jesus accomplish what had been foretold concerning him. (Mat. iii. 11,) that he should *baptize* his disciples *with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*. And surely the *sacred flame* did not only illuminate *their minds* with celestial brightness, but did also cause *their whole hearts* to glow with love to God and zeal for his gospel. To this purpose may he still be *imparted to us*, whether we hold public or private stations in the *church;* and may our regards to him be ever most dutifully maintained: Especially may he be *poured out* upon the *ministers* of it, to direct them how they should *speak the wonderful things of God;* and may their *hearers*, under his gracious energy, *gladly receive the word.*

11

Let us not wonder if the *more common operations* of the Spirit on men's minds be *derided* by profane ignorance and folly, when there were *some*, even on this glorious day, who were stupid or malicious enough to ascribe *the amazing event* we have been surveying, to the supposed *intoxication* of the *apostles*, and to say, they were *full of sweet wine*. But let us observe, how well Peter vindicated himself and his brethren, with *words*, not of satire and reproach, but of *meekness* and *sobriety*, as well as of *truth;* shewing at once the most perfect command, both of his reason and of his temper. Justly did he *apply* on this occasion *that* celebrated *prophecy* of Joel, in which this grand event is so exactly described. Let us adore the divine goodness, which has *poured forth the Spirit* like a refreshing dew *upon his church*. Let us pray that we may *all receive it*, in such degrees as may suit the present state of things. And let us deprecate *those judgments*, which the *contempt of the Spirit* has too evident a tendency to produce.

13

14, 15

16—18

Justly might God have made *our land* gloomy and horrible with *blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke*. Justly might he have *turned our sun into darkness, and our moon into blood*. Let us adore his patience that these *national judgments*, which are so well deserved, have been thus long with-held. But let us also remember, that *the great and notable day* is approaching, in which *the Lord*

19, 20

Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not a gospel so gloriously attested. (2 Thess. i. 7, 8.) Then shall *these figurative expressions* be *literally fulfilled.* Then shall *the heavenly luminaries* be *quenched* in their orbs; *the elements shall melt with fervent heat,* and *the earth and all that is therein shall be burnt up:* (2 Pet. iii. 10.) But even then, *all those* that have *believed in Christ,* and with obedient love have *called upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved* with an everlasting salvation. May *that* be through grace *our happy portion;* and may *its prospects* be daily brightening upon us, till it shall open *in its full lustre,* and shine beautiful and glorious *amidst the flames* of a *dissolving world!* SECT. iii. Ver 21

SECT. IV.

Peter continues his discourse to the people just after the descent of the Holy Spirit, and shews that Jesus, whom they crucified, was risen from the dead, and was the true Messiah. Acts II. 22—36.

Acts II. 22.

YE men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

Acts II. 22.

WHEN Peter had quoted the passage in Joel, mentioned above, as referring to the days of the Messiah, he added, *Ye men of Israel,* let me charge it upon you, that ye *hear these words* with an attention proportionable to the importance of them: You cannot but remember, that there hath lately appeared amongst you a celebrated person, called *Jesus the Nazarene; a man* who was approved and *recommended to you*[a] *by God* himself, *by* those *powerful operations, and wonders, and signs, which God wrought by him in the midst of you,* in your most public places and assemblies; *as ye yourselves* have seen, and cannot take upon you to deny but that ye *also know:* SECT. iv. Acts II. 22.

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Yet you were so far from paying *him* any becoming regard, that *you* entered into an impious and ungrateful conspiracy against his life; and *have* in prosecution thereof *seized* him, even this illustrious prophet, *being given up* into your hands, *by the determinate counsel and prescience of God*[b], who well knew what treatment he would meet 23

a *Recommended to you.*] Αποδεδειγμενον εις υμας, *pointed out to you* as the object of your most respectful regards.

b *Prescience of God.*] Grotius, as well as Beza, observes, that προγνωσις must here signify *decree;* and Elsner has shewn, it has that signification in approved Greek writers. And it is certain, παδίδωμι signifies one *given up* into the hands of the enemy. See Elsner, and Raphel. *in loc.*

c *By*

SECT. iv.

Acts II. 23.

meet with from you, *and* for wise and good reasons permitted it to be: Him, I say, *by the hands of* Gentile *sinners* [c], with public ignominy you *have fastened* [*to the cross*] *and slain*, as if he had been the meanest and vilest of malefactors.

24 But be it known unto you, that God hath abundantly vindicated the honour of this his dear Son, whom you had thus infamously abused, and hath borne a most glorious testimony to his innocence, truth, and dignity; for it is he *whom God hath raised up* from the dead, by a miraculous effort of his divine power, *having loosed* the bonds in which he lay, when *the pains of death* had done their work upon him; [d] *as* indeed *it was impossible*, all things considered, *that he should* finally *be held under* the power of *it*.

24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

25 *For David saith concerning him* [e], when he is speaking in the person of the Messiah, (Psal. xvi. 8. & seq.) "*I have regarded the Lord as always before me* [f], with an assurance that in the greatest trials I am called to he will continually

25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved.

[c] *By the hands of* Gentile *sinners.*] That is, *by the hands* of the *wicked* and idolatrous Romans, who were the *immediate agents* in the *crucifixion of Christ*, yet were only the *instruments* of the Jewish rage and cruelty in what they did. Some *copies* read it, διὰ χειρὸς ἀνομων, *by the hand of the ungodly.*

[d] *The pains of death.*] Beza conjectures, (I think, with great probability,) that as the Hebrew word, חֶבֶל with the variation only of *one little point* may indifferently signify *pains* or *bonds*, the former is here used for the latter, which to be sure agrees best with the connection. Else it must necessarily signify *the state of confinement* to which *the pains of death* had brought him, by an *Hebraism*, which sometimes occurs. Compare Mat. xxiv. 15. and Rev. xvii. 1.

[e] *David saith concerning him.*] It is plain, that εἰς αὐτὸν here signifies *of* or *concerning him.* The *particle* εἰς has the same import, Eph. v. 32. and πρὸς is likewise used in the same sense, Heb. i. 7. as the *prefix* ל and the *particle* אֶל is sometimes in Hebrew put for עַל. Compare Gen. xx. 13. xxvi. 7. Esth. iii. 2. Psal. iii. 3. xxv. 19. 24. xci. 11. and Job xlii. 8. (See Elsner *in loc.* and Gataker on the *Title* to Antoninus) Mr. Jeffery (in his *True Grounds*, p. 121.) observes from this text, and lays great stress upon it every where, that the *apostle* does not make David to speak these things, first *of himself*, and then *of the Messiah*, only in a secondary sense, but quotes them as referring to Christ *alone.*

[f] *I have regarded the Lord as always before me.*] The *sixteenth psalm*, from whence this quotation is taken, cannot without great difficulty be *wholly explained*, as spoken in the person of the Messiah; and yet it is very hard to say, on that supposition, where he is *first introduced* as speaking. We might have imagined the sense of the 10th *verse* to have been, "I am persuaded *thou will not leave my soul in hell*, because *thou will not suffer Christ thine Holy One to see corruption* in the grave; and, by what thou wilt do *for him* in raising him up, thou wilt give me a security of my own resurrection." This, I say, might have seemed *an easy solution*, did not the *apostle* in the 31st *verse*, refer *both the clauses* to Christ. I therefore suppose *the transition* to be made immediately after the 7th *verse* of the *psalm*, and to express *the instruction* which David received from God, in a revelation concerning the Messiah made to him *in the night-season*; when, perhaps, he had some *vision*, in which he heard him speak the following words.—The passage is here *quoted* in the words of the Greek *translation*, something different from the Hebrew; but the sense is much the same.

g *Thou*

tinually be ready to appear in my behalf; *because* I know that *he is at my right hand*, in the whole series of my labours and sufferings, *that I might not be moved* by any of them. And *for this reason*, upon account of the firm confidence I have in him, *my heart is glad, and my tongue exulteth* in the most chearful manner; yea, and *moreover too*, even *my* mortal *flesh*, while it lodges in the sepulchre, *shall rest in* a joyful and assured *hope*; Because I am fully satisfied, *that thou wilt not leave my soul*, while separated from it, *in the unseen world*;[g] *neither wilt thou permit* even the body of *thine Holy One*, thy peculiar favourite, whom thou hast set apart to such honourable and important services, so much as *to see corruption* in the grave, or to lie so long there as in the course of nature to be in danger of putrefaction. *Thou hast made me to know the ways of life*, to which thou wilt assuredly conduct me; and after all my sufferings here, *thou wilt fill me with joy*, in those upper and more glorious regions to which thou wilt raise me, making me glad *with* the light of *thy countenance*, and taking me to dwell in thine immediate presence, where there is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand, where there are everlasting and uninterrupted pleasures."

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad: moreover also, my flesh shall rest in hope:

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life: thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

And now continued Peter, when he had recited these words at large, Ye *men* of Israel, whom I respect [*and*] love as my *brethren, permit me to speak freely to you concerning the patriarch David* who wrote this, and to open a hint, which if pursued will lead you into the true sense of many other scriptures, which you and your teachers are far from understanding. As for the royal psalmist, you well know *that he is* long since *both dead and buried*; *and* that *his sepulchre* in which his dust remains *is* here *among us* in Jerusalem, even *unto this day*[h]. He

29 Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day:

[g] *Thou wilt not leave my soul in the unseen world.*] Beza (to guard against the Popish doctrine of *Christ's descent into hell*,) would render the words as they stand in the Hebrew, נפשי לשאול *my corpse in the grave*: And it is certain that *nephesh* and *sheol* have sometimes these significations; (see Whitby and Beza *in loc.*) and the phrase of *bringing a person's life down to the grave*, or *up from it*, often occurs. (Compare Psal. xxx. 3. xlix. 15. lxxxvi. 13. lxxxviii. 3. lxxxix. 48.)—But as Ψυχη, which is the word here used, can hardly be thought to signify *a dead body* and αδης is generally put for *the state of separate spirits*, (see *note* f on Mat. xvi. 18. p. 462. the version here given seemed preferable to any other: nor can any just inference be drawn from it, in favour of *Christ's descent into* the *hell* of the damned.

[h] *His sepulchre is among us unto this day.*]

SECT. iv.

Acts II. 30.

He *therefore* could not say this of himself; but *being a* divinely inspired *prophet, and knowing that God had,* in a special revelation from heaven, solemnly *sworn to him with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins,* or out of his descendants, *he would, according to the flesh*[1], when he should send his Son into the world in the human nature, *raise up the* promised *Messiah, to sit on his throne,* and to inherit universal empire;

30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne:

31 (Psal. cxxxii. 11.) *He,* with a firm reliance on the faithfulness of God, *foreseeing* [*this*] great event, by divine inspiration *spake* the words which I have now been repeating; not meaning them *of* himself, or intending they should be taken in any lower sense, but referring them to *the resurrection of the Messiah;* thereby plainly signifying, *that his soul should not be left in the unseen world, nor his flesh* be suffered to *see corruption.*

31 He seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

32 *This* very *Jesus* then, whom we assert to be the true Messiah, *God hath* now *raised up* according to the tenor of this promise; *of which* resurrection, astonishing as it may seem, *all we* his apostles *are witnesses,* on our own personal and certain knowledge; having seen him with our eyes, and examined into the truth of the

32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

33 matter with all possible care. And more than this, we solemnly assure you, that mean and contemptible as this Jesus once appeared among you, he is invested now with sovereign dominion; and *being exalted therefore to* supreme majesty and glory at *the right hand of God, and having,* as the great anointed of the Lord, *received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, he hath,* agreeable to the notices he gave us

33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

Jerome mentions the remains of David's *sepulchre* as extant in his time; (*Hier. Epist.* xvi. *ad Marcell.*) and a large account of other testimonies concerning it may be seen in Fabricius. (*Cod. Apoc. Vet. Test.* p. 1063—1070.) It is strange, that *this sepulchre,* should have survived so much barbarous rage, as we know Jerusalem was often subjected to; but perhaps, it was *rebuilt* in later days. As for the *treasures,* which Josephus so often mentions as found in this sepulchre by Hyrcanus and Herod, (*Antiq. lib.* vii. *cap* 15, [al. 12,] § 3; *lib.* xiii. *cap.* 8. [al. 16,] § 4;—*lib.* xvi. *cap.* 7; [al. 11,] § 1;—& *Bell. Jud. lib.* i. *cap.* 2. § 5. *Havercr.*) I think with Beza, the stories have an air of fable.

[1] *According to the flesh.*] This is expressed in the *original* in such a manner, with an *article* prefixed, (το κατα σαρκα αναστησαι τον Χριστον,) as seems to refer *these words,* not to *the loins* of David, but to Christ; and so may be an intimation, that it was only with respect to *his human nature* that the Messiah should *descend from* David, while there was still a *higher nature* in which he was *superior to him,* and was indeed to be regarded as *the Son of God.* (Compare Rom. i. 3, 4.) It was with a view to this, that Clarius and some others suppose *these words* to be inserted here by the *apostle*; and I have therefore so disposed them in the *version,* as to leave no room for any ambiguity.

[k] *Until*

us before his ascension, which happened but ten days ago, *shed forth this* miraculous effusion of it, *which* has produced the wonderful effects that *you now see and hear*, and which is given us an holy unction from above, by which he constitutes us ministers in his church below.

34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

And indeed it appears from other passages of his writings, that the great patriarch, whom I mentioned before, had some views to this kingdom of the Messiah; *for David*, who has never yet been raised from the dead *is not* himself *ascended into heaven* in the body, to be advanced there to the highest dignity and power; *but* plainly intimates, that this belonged to one superior to himself, when *he says*, (Psal. cx. 1.) "*The Lord* Jehovah *said unto my Lord*, that is, God the Father said unto the Messiah, (whom though in one sense he is to be my Son, I honour as my Lord,) *Sit thou* exalted on a throne *at my right hand*, *Until I make* all that are so presumptuous as to go on to be *thine enemies thy footstool*[k] and lay them prostrate at thy feet, so that thou mayest trample upon them at pleasure, as entirely subdued." 34 35

35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Therefore upon the whole, from this concurrent evidence both of prophecy and miracle, and from the testimony God has given to that Jesus whom we preach, not only by his resurrection from the dead, but by the effusion of the Holy Spirit on his followers, *let all the house of Israel assuredly know*, how contrary soever it may be to their former apprehensions and rooted prejudices, *that God hath made this Jesus, whom you* rejected and *crucified*, that *Lord and* that *Messiah* whose kingdom you profess so eagerly to desire, and who will surely come to execute his wrath upon you, if you are still so obstinate as to continue in your sins. 36

Thus Peter concluded his discourse, and God blessed it as the means of awakening and converting thousands, as we shall see in the following section.

IMPROVE-

k *Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*] This *text* is quoted on this occasion with the happiest address, as suggesting, in the words of David, their great prophetic monarch, how certain *their own ruin* must be, if they went on to *oppose* Christ.—Elsner has a fine collection of ancient passages, referring to the custom of *trampling upon the vanquished*, dead or alive.

SECT. V.

also *shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*, by which he will own the work of his grace upon your hearts, and qualify you for serving that Lord whom you have crucified. *For the promise* of the Spirit *is* made, as you see in the forecited passage from Joel, (ver. 17, 18.) *to you, and to your children*[c], whom God is ready to admit to the same privilege with you; *and* not only so, but it extends to the remotest nations, *to all that are afar off*[d], as well as to them that are near, even to *as many as the Lord our God shall call* by the preaching of his gospel; which shall be propagated to the ends of the earth, and receive glorious attestations every where, by the effusion of the like miraculous gifts as we have received on many, and by the communication of the inward graces of the Spirit unto all who shall become obedient to the faith.

Acts II. 39.

39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

40 Thus Peter addressed himself to the multitude, *and with many other words he bore his testimony* to these important truths, *and* earnestly *exhorted* them to an immediate consideration of the danger of persisting in their infidelity; *saying* in the conclusion of all, See that you lay these things to heart, receiving them with such regard as the importance of the case requires; renounce that obstinate unbelief in which you joined with those who crucified Christ, and *be ye saved from* that ruin which will quickly come upon *this perverse* and depraved *generation.*

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

41 And the exhortation was not in vain; for many were awakened and wrought upon by it. *They therefore who received his word with readiness, were baptized:* thereby taking upon them the public profession of faith in Jesus as the Messiah: *And there were added to* the number [of *the disciples*] *that very day about three thousand*

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

c *The promise is to you, and to your children.*] Considering that *the gift of the Spirit* had been mentioned *just before*, it seems most natural to interpret *this*, as a reference to *that passage* in Joel, which had been so largely recited above, (ver. 17, *& seq.*) where God promises *the effusion of the Spirit on their sons and their daughters:* And accordingly I have paraphrased *the latter clause of this verse* as referring to *its extraordinary gifts*; and the rather, as the *sanctifying influence of the Spirit* must already have been received, to prepare them for *entering into the church by baptism.* But, if *the promise* be interpreted as referring to a remoter clause, *the forgiveness of their sins*, this *whole verse* must be taken *in a greater latitude*, as referring to the *encouragement* which all future *converts* and *their children* had, to expect *the benefits of the gospel:* In which view, I think it would much favour *infant-baptism*, as many writers on the subject have largely shewn.

d *To all that are afar off.*] Since Peter knew nothing as yet of the intended *calling of the Gentiles*, he could only mean by this, that the *gospel* should be preached *to all the dispersed of Israel* in distant nations: But the *Spirit of God* might have *a further view.*

SECT. V.

Acts II. 41.

sand souls [e]. Nor was this only a transport of sudden passion, with which they were affected only for the present, with an impression that quickly wore off: but on the contrary, it produced the most solid and lasting effects. *And* notwithstanding all the apparent danger to which they were exposed, *they continued stedfast in* their attendance on the word which *the apostles* preached, and resolutely adhered to their *doctrine* [f]: And though many of them that believed were such as had come thither out of foreign countries, who would otherwise have returned home immediately after the feast, they staid a considerable time longer at Jerusalem, to be more thoroughly instructed in the Christian faith; *and* they all lived in the most endearing *fellowship* and intimate friendship with each other, *and* particularly expressed their mutual affection *in breaking of bread* together [g], *and* joining *in* the exercise of social *prayer*. *And* many others who were not converted, when they took notice of this wonderful effect of the apostles preaching, were mightily struck and impressed with the thought of it; so that a reverential *fear* and inward dread *fell upon every soul*, and spread itself over the whole city and neighbourhood, at the sight of so unexampled an event,

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

42

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

43

e *There were added——that very day about three thousand souls.*] It is commonly said, that all these were *converted by one sermon*. But it is probable, that, while Peter was preaching in the Syriac language, the *other apostles* were preaching at some small distance, much to the same purpose, in *other languages*; and it is not surely to be imagined, that *none* of them but Peter should be blessed as the means of converting any soul; not to insist upon it, that *he himself* might deliver *several discourses this day* to different auditories, when the concourse of people was so great, and their languages so various.——It will not be improper to add, that προσετέθησαν emphatically signifies *to pass over to a body of men*, as Bos, Raphelius, and Elsner have shewn; and that Elsner has shewn at large, in a very curious note on this clause, not only, (as Gataker, Raphelius, and many others have,) that *souls* often signifies *persons* in the Greek and Latin classics; but also, that Jamblicus in his *Life of Pythagoras* has exactly imitated this passage, in the account he gives of *that philosopher's success* in Italy, as proselyting *two thousand by one discourse*, engaging them to *continue with him*, frequently *worshipping in the temples*, and *sharing their goods in common*, as these *primitive* Christians did: Facts, of which we have no manner of convincing evidence, and which were probably intended to *slur Christianity* by an invidious comparison. (*Elsn. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 375, 376.) Compare Vol. II. Sect. 90. note c. p. 471.

f *They continued stedfast in the apostles doctrine.*] This may intimatate, on the one hand, that *many efforts* were made to *shake their resolution*; and on the other, that upon fuller inquiry they *found all things*, as the *apostles* had represented.

g *In breaking of bread.*] Though we have great reason to believe, that the *eucharist* was *often celebrated* among these *primitive converts*, perhaps much oftener than *every Lord's day*, yet I cannot see reason to conclude with Suicer, (*Thesaur. Eccles.* Vol. II. p. 105.) Lightfoot, Pearson, and many others, that *this phrase* must here refer to it, since it may undoubtedly signify *common meals*, as Casaubon, Grotius, Wolfius, and several others have shewn; and in this sense the phrase is used, Luke xxiv. 35, where it is plain *the eucharist* could not be intended.

h *In*

SECT. V.

Acts II. 43.

event, which they apprehended might be the fore-runner of some public calamity, on those who had slain that Jesus, of whom it was declared by his disciples, that it was all effected by his power: *And* the consternation was farther encreased, as *many miracles and signs*, which plainly shewed an extraordinary divine interposition, *were wrought by the apostles* in his name.

44 *And all that believed were* together meeting as frequently as possible *in the same place*[h]; *and* such were their mutual affection and love to each other, that *they had all things in common*[i].

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common.

45 *And* this generous principle went so far, that *they* who had estates, or any other valuable substance, *sold their possessions and effects, and* readily *divided* the price of *them to all* their brethren, *as every one had* particular *necessity*.

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man need.

46 (Compare chap. iv. 34, 35.) *And they continued* resolutely and *unanimously in the temple*, at the appointed hours of public worship *every day: And* at other times they associated, as frequently as they could, *breaking bread from house to house*, each family making entertainments for their brethren, especially for those who were sojourners in Jerusalem: And *they partook of their* common *refreshment, with* the greatest

46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart;

h *In the same place.*] Dr. Whitby pleads that, as they were at least three thousand one hundred and twenty, they could not be *in the same place*, and therefore would understand it of *communion in the same action*. He would rather render it, (as *our translation* does,) they *were together*; and produces several places from the *Septuagint* to this purpose, as Ezra iv. 3; Psal. xlix. 2; Isa. lxvi. 17; Jer. vi. 12, &c. But, as it generally signifies *an assembly in the same place*, and many *larger assemblies* than of three or four thousand people are held, it seemed best to render it thus, only qualifying it as in the *paraphrase*, especially as επι το αυτο has plainly this sense, ver. 1.

i *Had all things in common.*] Peculiar reasons made *this community of goods* eligible at that time, not only as *so many sojourners*, who had come from other parts, would justly be desirous to continue at Jerusalem, much longer than they intended when they *came up to the feast*, that they might get a thorough knowledge of the gospel, but as *the prospect* likewise *of the Roman conquests*, which according to Christ's known *prediction* were soon to swallow up *all Jewish property*, would of course *dispose many* more readily *to sell their lands*. But the *New Testament* abounds with passages, which plainly shew, this was *never intended for a general practice*.—None can reasonably imagine, that the *number of Christian converts*, even then at Jerusalem, is to be accounted for by a desire to *share* in these *divided goods*: For it is evident, that as *the portion* each could have would be *very small*, so *the hardships* to be endured for a *Christian profession* would soon *counterbalance* such advantages: and accordingly we find, *the converts at* Jerusalem were soon reduced to such necessitous circumstances, as to *need relief* by the contributions of their *Gentile brethren*. Candour would rather lead men to argue the *incontestable evidence* of the *gospel*, from its prevailing on the professors of it to *part with their estates*, to relieve persons, who, excepting the *community of their faith*, had no particular claim to their regards. If *such instances* were *numerous*, this argument is strengthened in proportion; and, if they be supposed *few*, the objection is proportionably weakened.

greatest *joy* on the side of those that made the entertainments; *and* with disinterested *simplicity of heart* in those who received them: and on all sides with the sincerest sentiments of devotion and friendship. Such was the effect the gospel had upon them, and in this manner they went on, *praising God* for the riches of his grace to them, *and having* in the general that *favour* and respect *among all the people*, which so amiable and benevolent a conduct would naturally secure, *And the Lord* Jesus Christ, to whom they had given up their names, *added daily to the church* considerable numbers of *those* happy souls *who* by this means *were saved* from the general destruction which was approaching, and from the future punishment to which they would otherwise have been transmitted by it.

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. 47

IMPROVEMENT.

FAITHFUL are the wounds of a friend; and far more *beautiful* than *a jewel of gold, or an ornament of fine gold,* is *a wise reprover on an obedient ear* (Prov. xxvii. 6; xxv. 12.) Happy are they who feel such an holy *compunction of soul* as these penitents did! *Salvation* is *come to their house,* and though they *sow in tears* they *shall reap in joy.* (Psal. cxxvi. 5.) What reason have we for thankfulness, that when we are crying out, *What shall we do?* the gospel gives us so ready an answer, and directs us to *faith* and *repentance,* as the sure way by which we may obtain *the remission of our sins,* and at length rise to *an inheritance among them that are sanctified.* Let us rejoice, that *the promise is to us, and to our seed;* and that the important *blessings of it* will run down *from generation to generation.* And let all the ardour of our souls be awakened to *secure these blessings,* and to *be saved* from that ruin in which we shall otherwise be involved with *the crooked and perverse generation* among which we live.

Ver. 37 38 39 40

Glorious effect of this convincing and excellent discourse, when *three thousand* were *in one day added to the church!* three thousand who not only expressed some present good impressions and resolutions, but *continued stedfast* in the religion they had embraced, and sacrificed all their worldly interests to it. How glorious an *earnest* of the *future success* of the gospel! How great an *encouragement* to the *apostles,* in all the difficulties they were to encounter; and how convincing *a proof* to all ages *of its truth!* since all these *proselytes* were made *upon the spot,* where if it had been *false,* it is impossible it should have been *believed* by any one

41 42

SECT. V. *rational inquirer*, how mean soever his capacity, or how low soever his rank in life had been.

Let us reflect with pleasure on *the happy change* produced in the *character* and *state* of these converts: *Bitter* as the first pangs of *their convictions* were, *anguish* soon yielded to *delight: Pardon* 46 *of sin*, and the *hope of glory* added *a relish before unknown* to the supports of *nature*, the accommodations of *life*, and the endearments of *friendship*. Whilst their hearts were opened in senti- 47 ments of *gratitude to God*, who had provided *a laver* for their *crimson sins*, which rendered them *like wool* and *like snow*; and to *that Redeemer*, who had *saved them by that blood* which they had 44 cruelly and impiously shed; they were also dilated *in liberality* and *bounty*; and they undoubtedly found *a rich equivalent* for all *the* 45 *worldly possessions* which they resigned, in *that holy joy* which sprang up in their souls, when *the treasures of the gospel* were open to them, and dealt out with so generous a hand.

47 So may *the kingdom of Christ* spread and flourish in the souls of men! So may *that blessed time come*, when through the operation of *the same Spirit*, (for *that Spirit* is for ever *the same.) nations shall be born in a day.* Let us not despair; *the morning* was *glorious*, and *in the even tide it shall be light.* (Zech. xiv. 7.) In the mean time, let us thankfully own whatever progress *Christianity* may be making amongst us, or others, though by slow degrees; and acknowledge, that it is *the great Lord of the church* who, by his secret but powerful influence *adds* unto its respective societies *such as shall be saved.* May the *additions* every where be *numerous*, and may *the great author of all good* be more thankfully *owned* in them all.

SECT. VI.

Peter and John, quickly after the feast of Pentecost, cure a man who had been lame from his birth, *at the temple-gate, which occasions a great concourse of admiring spectators.* Acts III. 1——11.

Acts III. 1.

SECT. VI. NOW while the church was in the flourishing state described above, an extraordinary circumstance happened, which tended still more to increase its numbers and reputation: For on a certain day, *about that time* [a], *Peter and John went*

Acts III. 1. NOW Peter and John went up together into the temple, at the hour

[a] *About that time.*] Thus I would choose, with Grotius, to render the words ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ at the beginning of this *chapter*, as it does not seem to suit so well with the *original*

hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*.

went up to the temple at the hour of prayer, [*being*] *the ninth hour*, that is, about three o'clock in the afternoon[b]; which was the usual time of day when great numbers attended the evening sacrifice, and joined their prayers with those of the priest, who was burning incense before the Lord. (Compare Luke i. 10.)

SECT. vi.

Acts III. 1.

2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple:

2 *And a certain man*, well known among them that frequented the place, *who had been lame from his mother's womb*, by a weakness in his ancles, which rendered him incapable of walking, *was carried* thither by the help of others; *whom they daily* brought and *laid* down *at the* eastern *gate of the temple, which is called* the *Beautiful* gate[c], being made of Corinthian brass, and richly adorned with the most curious workmanship; and here he lay, *to ask alms of those that entered into the temple* to pay their devotion there, as such charitable actions seem peculiarly suitable, when men are going to make their supplications to the God of mercy; and the relief that he obtained here was the only means he had for his subsistence. Such was the ease

3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms.

3 of this poor cripple, *who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple*, applied himself to them among the rest, and *begged to receive an alms* of them.

4 And Peter fastening his eyes upon him, with

4 *But Peter*, being then (as was observed before) *with John* the beloved disciple, felt at that time a strong emotion of soul, which intimated to him, that the divine energy was then

ginal, to take them to imply no more, than that Peter and John went up *together* to the temple. I see no reason to suppose with Dr. Lightfoot, that this happened *the same day*, on which *the Spirit* was miraculously *poured out*, or to conclude with others, that it was not till *the next year*, or at least several months after. The time is no where determined; but it appears most probable, that it was *soon after* the feast of *Pentecost*. Compare *note* c on Acts iv. 4. § 8.

[b] *At the hour of prayer*, being *the ninth hour*.] It may suffice once for all to observe, that the Jews divided the *time*, from the rising to the setting of the sun, into *twelve hours*, which were consequently, at different times of the year, *of unequal length*, as the days were longer or shorter. When we say therefore, (as we often do in this work,) that the *third hour* was *about nine in the morning*, the *ninth* about *three in the afternoon*, &c. we are not to be understood to speak with the utmost exactness. The *third hour* was the *middle space* between *sun-rising* and *noon*, which, if the sun rose at *five*, was *half an hour after eight*, if at *seven*, was *half an hour after nine*, &c.——The chief *hours of prayer* were *the third* and *the ninth*; at which seasons the *morning* and *evening sacrifices* were offered, and *incense*, as a kind of *emblem* representing *prayer*, burnt on the golden altar. See *Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib.* xiv. cap. 4, [al. 8,] § 3.

[c] *Called* the *Beautiful* gate.] This gate, which was added by Herod to the *court of the Gentiles*, was *thirty cubits* high and *fifteen* broad, and made of Corinthian *brass*, more pompous in its workmanship and splendour than those that were covered with *silver* and *gold*. (*Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib.* v. *cap.* 5, [al. vi. 6,] § 3.) Josephus, as our present copies stand, says it was *the outer gate*; but Lud. Cappellus thinks, this reading is wrong, and that it was *the inner gate*; between the *court of the Gentiles* and that of *Israel*: and Grotius allows of his reasoning. See Grot. *in loc.*

[d] *Silver*

SECT. VI.

Acts III. 5.

then to be displayed in the illustrious miracle to be wrought by his means: and turning therefore to the poor man, and *looking stedfastly upon him*, he *said*, *Look upon us.* *And* accordingly *he fixed his eyes upon them*, as *expecting to receive something from them* for the relief of his neces-
6 sities. *But Peter*, under the divine impulse, intended him a far more important favour; and therefore *said*, As for *silver and gold, I have none* of either to impart to thee[d], were I ever so free to do it; *but what I have* in my power *I* willingly *give thee;* and thou shalt find it not less valuable: I say unto thee, therefore, *in the* great and prevailing *name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*, and as a proof that he is indeed the
7 Messiah, *rise up and walk.* *And* Peter *taking him by the right hand*, encouraged him to do as *he* had said, and *raised him up: And immediately* on his speaking this, and touching him, *his feet and* his *ancle bones*, which had before been disabled, *were* in an extraordinary manner *strengthened* and reduced to their proper situation.
8 *And leaping up* from the place were he lay, *he* first *stood* in an erect posture, which he had never before been able to do, *and* then *walked about* with strength and steadiness, *and entered with them into* the court of *the temple*, there to offer his first fruits of thanksgiving; sometimes *walking*, *and* sometimes *leaping* for joy, *and* in a rapture of astonishment and thankfulness, *praising God* for so singular a mercy manifested to him. (Compare Isa. xxxv. 6.)
9 *And all the people* who were there present, *saw him* thus *walking* in the court of the temple and the cloyster adjacent to it, *and* heard him *praising God* with this uncommon ecstasy of de-
10 light: *And they knew him* perfectly well, *that this was he who had sat* so long *at the Beautiful gate of the temple*, to beg *for alms* of those that entered in and came out: *And they were filled with* awful *astonishment*, *and* felt in themselves likewise a kind of joyful *ecstasy*, something resembling his, *at that* miraculous event *which had befallen him.*

with John, said, Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none: but such as I have, give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.

7 And he took him by the right hand, and lift *him* up; and immediately his feet and ancle bones received strength.

8 And he leaping up, stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God.

10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

And

d *Silver and gold I have none.*] This was after *the estates were sold*, (chap. ii. 45,) and plainly shews, how far *the apostles* were from *enriching themselves* by the treasures which passed through their hands, as Mr. Reynolds well observes in his *Letters to a Deist*, No. iii. p. 242. By his mentioning *gold* as well as *silver*, (which *a beggar* like this could not expect to receive) he probably meant to speak of *himself* as continuing still *a poor man*, and not merely to say, that he had *no gold about him.*

e *Kept*

11 And as the lame man which was healed, held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's greatly wondering.

And, upon this, *while the lame man who was* thus wonderfully *healed*, full of the tenderest sentiments of gratitude, still *kept his hold of Peter and John*[e], and walked on between them, sometimes taking them by the hand, and sometimes embracing them as his great benefactors and the means of his deliverance; *all the people* in the neighbouring parts, alarmed with so strange a story, *ran together to them in* great *amazement, to the* spacious and celebrated *portico* of the temple, which (for reasons elsewhere assigned) was *called Solomon's* portico[f]. And Peter observing the great concourse of people, and finding that they were exceedingly affected with the miracle which had been wrought, took that opportunity of making a very instructive discourse to them, which will be recorded in the ensuing section.

SECT. VI.

Acts III. 11.

IMPROVEMENT.

HAPPY are those souls, who are so formed for *devotion*, that the proper *returning seasons* of it, whether public or private, are always welcome! Doubly delightful *that friendship*, which, like this of Peter and John, is endeared not only by *taking sweet counsel together*, but by *going to the house of God in company!* (Psal. lv. 14.) Ver. 1

If we desire *this devotion* should be *acceptable*, let us endeavour not only to lay aside all the malignant passions, and to *lift up holy hands without wrath*; (1 Tim. ii. 8.) but let us *stretch out our hands* in works of *benevolence* and *kindness*. To our piety let us add *the most diffusive charity* which our *circumstances* will *permit*; and there are none, whose circumstances will forbid every exercise of it. As for those that *have neither silver and gold*, such as they have *let them give*. 3, 4, 6

These holy *apostles*, we see, had not *enriched themselves* by being intrusted with the *distribution of those goods* which were *laid* at *their feet*; but had approved themselves *faithful stewards*: The *members of Christ* were far dearer to them than any temporal interest of their own: and fatally, sure, would *the church* in all ages have been mistaken, if it had measured the *worth of its pastors* by *their wealth*. They bestowed nevertheless *a much more* 6 *valuable*

e *Kept his hold of Peter and John.*] Perhaps fearing his *lameness* should return, if he lost sight of them, as Beza and others have observed.

f *The portico called Solomon's.*] The reason why it was *so called*, and what a sort of building it was, may be seen in *note* b on John x. 23. p. 88. To which we may add, that this is said to have been *the only part of the temple*, which was not destroyed by the Chaldeans.

SECT. VI.

Ver. *valuable bounty:* And if it be more desirable to *heal men's bodies* than to enrich them, how much more advantageous is it to be the instrument of *healing their souls?* which, if it be ever accomplished, must surely be *in the* same *name*, even that *of Jesus of Nazareth.* May he *strengthen the feeble powers* of fallen nature, while we are attempting to *raise men up;* and may *spiritual health* 7 and *vigour*, when restored, *be improved*, like *the cure* wrought on 9 this *lame man*, in the *service of God*, and *a thankful acknowledg-* 8 *ment* of his goodness.

We are not to wonder, that, as *the name of Jesus*, their great deliverer, is incomparably *precious* to all that truly believe, such have also some peculiarly tender *friendships for the persons*, by 11 whose means he has wrought this good work upon them. May *many such friendships* be formed now, and be perfected in glory; and, in the mean time, may *the ministers of Christ* be watching *every opportunity* of doing good, and especially when they see men under any lively impressions which tend towards religion! May they have that holy mixture of *zeal* and *prudence*, which taught *the apostles* how to speak *a word in season;* a word which proved so remarkably *good*, and was owned by God in so singular a manner, for the *conversion* and *salvation* of multitudes that heard it!

SECT. VII.

Peter makes a most affectionate discourse to the people assembled in the temple, on occasion of the cure of the lame man. Acts III. 12, *to the end.*

Acts III. 12.

SECT. VII. THE miraculous cure of the lame man at the Beautiful gate of the temple was presently reported in the city, and occasioned (as we have Acts III. 12. seen before) a vast concourse of people, who ran together to the temple, and gathered in crouds about Peter and John, astonished at so marvellous a cure, and eager to behold the persons who had wrought it. *And Peter seeing* [*this*] was ready to improve it as a proper opportunity of renewing his address to them, upon that important errand with which, as an apostle of Jesus, he was charged; accordingly he *answered* those of *the people* who were there assembled, and were earnestly inquiring into the circumstances of the fact, in the following manner.

Acts III. 12. AND when Peter saw *it*, he answered unto the people,—

Ye men of Israel, why do ye wonder so *at this* which has now happened, when so much greater miracles

—Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or

or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

miracles have lately been performed among you? *or why do ye fix your eyes* so earnestly *on us*, with that astonishment which your looks express, *as if* it were *by our own power, or* by any peculiar *piety* and holiness of ours, that *we had made this* poor *man* able *to walk?* We would by no means take the honour of this miracle to ourselves, but would direct your views unto the great original of all, even *the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob*, whom we adore and reverence as *the God of our fathers*[a]; and would have you to consider what has now happened, as a signal proof that he *hath glorified his Son Jesus*, and given all power into his hands, even that Jesus *whom you*, kind as his design and exemplary as his life was, ungratefully *delivered up* to the Roman power as a criminal, *and* treated with such vile contempt, as that you openly *renounced* and refused to accept of *him in the presence of Pilate, when he* was satisfied of his innocence, and *determined to release him.* *But you*, I say, *renounced the Holy and Righteous One*, declaring that you would not own him as your king, nor even be contented to admit of his discharge, when it was offered by the Roman governor, and pressed upon you; *and* were so set against him, that with outrageous clamour you *desired* rather that Barrabbas, one of the most infamous of mankind, a robber and *a murderer, might be granted* and released *unto you: And* while you asked for the deliverance of so vile a wretch, you inhumanly and insolently *killed* him who is *the* great author and *Prince of life*, the only person who had power to conduct you to it[b]; *Whom* nevertheless *God has* amply vindicated, having *raised* him up *from the dead; of which we* his apostles *are witnesses*, upon a repeated testimony of our own senses, in circumstances in which it was impossible that they should be deceived.

13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers hath glorified his son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go.

14 But ye denied the Holy One, and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you:

15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

[a] *The God of our fathers.*] This was wisely introduced here in the beginning of his discourse, that it might appear, they taught *no new religion*, inconsistent with the *Mosaic*, and were far from having the least design to divert their regards from *the God of Israel.*—For the force of the word ηρνησασθε, which we have rendered *renounced*, see *Heins. Exercit. Sacr.* p. 254, 255.

[b] *Killed the Prince of life.*] Even him, to whom *the Father* had *given to have life in himself*, (John v. 26.) and whom he had appointed to *conduct his followers* to life and glory. The *contrast* between their *killing such a person*, and *interceding for* the pardon of *a murderer, a destroyer of life* has a peculiar energy.

[c] *And*

SECT. vii.

deceived. *And* God is still continuing to heap new honours upon him, whom you have treated with so much infamy; for be it known unto you,

Acts III. 16. it is *by faith in his name* that *he hath strengthened this* poor *man* [c], *whom you see* here before you, *and* whom you *know* to have been unable from his birth to walk: [*Yea*] I repeat it again, as what highly concerns you all to know and regard, It is *his name, and the faith which is* centred *in him*, and which derives its efficacy from his power, that *has given him this perfect* strength and *soundness*, which he now manifests *before you all.*

16 And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him, hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

17 *And now, brethren*, while I am urging this for your conviction, that I may lead you to repent of your great wickedness in crucifying so excellent and so divine a person, I would not aggravate the crime you have been guilty of beyond due bounds, so as to drive you to despair; as *I know that* it was *through ignorance* of his true character that *you did* [*it*,] *as* [*did*] *also your rulers* [d], by whom you were led on and prompted to it: For surely, if the dignity and greatness of his person, and his divine authority and mission had been known, both you and they must have treated him in a very different

17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did *it*, as *did* also your rulers.

18 manner, (Compare 1 Cor. ii. 8.) *But God* permitted this that you have done, and overruled it for wise and gracious purposes; and *hath thus fulfilled those things which he* so plainly had *foretold by the mouth of all his prophets* in the various ages of the world: even *that Christ should suffer*, as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of his people. (Compare Acts xiii. 27.)

18 But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

19 See to it *therefore*, that it be your immediate care to secure an interest in the benefits purchased by his death: And to this purpose let us exhort you to *repent* of your iniquities, *and* with a sense of what you have done amiss to *turn* to God in the way of sincere and universal obedience, *that so your sins may be blotted out*, and

19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

c *And by faith in his name he hath strengthened*, &c.] The construction of the *original* as it is commonly *pointed*, is so exceedingly perplexed, that Heinsius's manner of *pointing* seems greatly to be preferred. He places *a period* after ἐστερεωσε, referring that verb to ὁ Θεὸς in the *preceding verse*, and Τὸ ὀνομα to ἐδωκεν in the latter clause of *this*.

d *Through ignorance you did it*, &c.] Probably, if it had *not been so*, they would have been *immediately destroyed*, or reserved to vengeance without any offer of pardon. Yet it is plain, *their ignorance*, being in itself *highly criminal* amidst such means of information, *did not excuse them* from great guilt.

c *That*

SECT. vii.

Acts III. 20.

and you may be delivered from the heavy burden of your guilt; *that seasons of* sacred *refreshment* and delight *may come* upon you *from the presence of the Lord*[e]. *And that* in consequence of your complying with this important counsel, you may not only be received to all the joys of a state of pardon and divine acceptance, but *he may* at length *send unto you* this *Jesus Christ who was* so long *before appointed*[f] by God to this blessed purpose, and represented and proclaimed under such a variety of symbols as the great Saviour of lost sinners; that having triumphed over all his enemies, and accomplished all the prophecies as to the prosperity and glory of his church on earth, he may finally receive you and all his faithful servants to complete and eternal happiness above. Submit yourselves this day then to this glorious Redeemer, *whom* you must not *indeed* expect, as immediately to appear in person among you; for *heaven must* continue to *receive* and retain him, *till the* long expected and happy *times of the regulation of all things*[g], that is, till the great appointed day, when God will rectify all the seeming irregularities of his present dispensations, and make the cause of righteousness and truth for ever triumphant and glorious: *Concerning, which* [great *events*,] (that is, that such a Saviour

20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

21 Whom the heaven must receive, until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began.

21

e *That seasons of refreshment may come, &c.*] So it is that Tertullian, Luther, Heinsius, Lightfoot, De Dieu, and Raphelius. (*ex Herod*, p. 329.) I think very reasonably, render the words οπως αν ελθωσιν, &c. as the same phrase is used, Luke ii. 35. οπως αν αποκαλυφθωσιν, &c. *that the thoughts may be revealed*; and Mat. vi. 5. οπως αν φανωσι, *that they may be seen.* (See also Acts xv. 17. and Rom. iii. 4.— Erasmus and Piscator render it, *Seeing times of refreshment are come*; and Beza, *After that*, or *when they shall come*: But the authorities produced in favour of this version seem not sufficient to justify it; nor was the *blotting out the sins* of penitents *deferred* to any distant time. *Divine refreshment* would no doubt, *immediately* mingle itself with a sense of pardon, and *eternal happiness*, would certainly *at length* succeed; but the *following clause* seems to intimate, that Peter apprehended *the conversion of the Jews*, as a people, would be *attended* with some extraordinary scene of *prosperity* and *joy*, and open' *a speedy way* to Christ's *descent from heaven*, in order to *the restitution of all things*. I have the pleasure, since I wrote this, to find that the learned Vitringa agrees with me in this interpretation. *Vitring. Observ. Sacr lib.* v. *cap.* 6, § 14.

f *Before appointed.*] Instead of προκεχειρισμενον, *before preached*, I here follow Beza in reading προκεχειρισμενον as Tertullian and several of the *fathers* quote it, and the Alexandrian and several other valuable *manuscripts* and *ancient versions* likewise have it; and then υμιν must (as in *this version*) be referred to αποστειλη, *shall send to you*, &c.

g *The regulation of all things.*] This αποκαταστασις may so well be explained of *regulating* the present *disorders* in the moral world, and the seeming *inequalities* of providential dispensations, that it is surprising to find Dr. Thomas Burnet, Mr. Whiston, and other learned writers, urging it for such a *restoration* of the *paradisaical state of the earth*, as they on their different hypotheses have ventured to assert, without any clear warrant from *Scripture*, and amidst a thousand difficulties which clog our conceptions of it. (Compare *note* k on Mat. xvii. 11. p. 474.

h *From*

SECT. vii.

Acts III. 21.

Saviour should be raised up, and should at length be fixed in universal dominion, and the like, *God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets from the beginning of time* [h].

22 *For Moses*, the first of these prophets whose writings are come down to us, has in the plainest terms, described him, when he *said to the fathers* in his early days [i], (Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19. "*Surely a prophet shall the Lord your God* in after times *raise up unto you*, out of the families *of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear* and hearken to *in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you*: *And it shall come to pass* [*that*] *every soul who will not hearken to that prophet*, and be obedient to him, *shall be cut off from among the people* without mercy [k], and be made an example of the severest punishment due to such aggravated and ungrateful rebellion. *Yea, and* those that succeeded Moses, even *all the prophets from Samuel* [l], *and those that follow after, as many as spoke* any thing largely concerning the future purposes and schemes of divine Providence, *have also foretold these* important *days*, which, by the singular favour of God to you, ye are now so happy as to see.

25 Let us now, therefore, solemnly intreat you to regard and improve these declarations in a becoming

22 For Moses truly said unto the Fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

23 And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken have likewise foretold of these days.

25 Ye are the children

h *From the beginning of time.*] See note b on Luke i. 70. Vol. VI. p. 47.

i *Moses said to the fathers.*] This quotation from Deut. xviii. 15. *& seq.* does in its *primary sense* refer to the Messiah, as Dr. Bullock and Mr. Jeffery have excellently shewn; he being, *like* Moses, not only *a prophet*, but *a saviour*, and *a lawgiver* too. On this scripture does Limborch chiefly build in that noble controversy of his with Orobio, most justly called *Amica Collatio cum erudito Judæ*, which not only contains a variety of beautiful, and some of them very uncommon arguments, but is also on both sides so fine a model of a genteel and amicable manner of debating the most momentous question, as it would have been much for the credit of their religion and of themselves, if all other *advocates for Christianity* had followed. Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* is written with much of the same decent spirit, though by no means with equal compass and solidity of thought.

k *Shall be cut off from among the people.*] One cannot imagine a more masterly address than this, to warn the Jews of the dreadful consequence of their infidelity, in the very words of Moses, their favourite prophet, out of a pretended zeal for whom they were ready to reject *Christianity*, and to attempt its destruction. See above, sect. 4. note k. p. 519.

l *All the prophets from Samuel.*] As Samuel is the earliest *prophet* next to Moses, whose writings are come down to us, and as the books which go under his name, and were probably begun by his pen, speak very expressly of the Messiah, 1 Sam. ii 10. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3—5) nothing can be more unnecesary, and hardly any thing more unnatural, than to draw an argument from this passage to support the notion of Samuel's being *the author* of the *Pentateuch* which many texts in the *Old* and *New Testament* seem most directly to contradict. See *Lord Barrington's Essay on Var. Dispensat. Appendix*, No. ii. It would be trifling to argue from this expression of *all the prophets*, that every one of them, and particularly Jonah and Obadiah, must have said somewhat of the Messiah. It is abundantly sufficient, that it is true of *the prophets in general*.

ren of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

26 Unto you first God having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

coming manner: for you have peculiar obligations to do it, as *you are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God constituted* of old *with our fathers, saying to Abraham* again and again, (Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. xxii. 18.) "*And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.*" And accordingly this Messiah who was promised as so extensive and universal a blessing, has sprung from him; and *to you first* [m], *God having raised up his child Jesus*, from the loins of this pious patriarch, *has sent him* with ample demonstrations of his divine mission, lately in his own person, and now by our ministry and the effusion of his Spirit, to offer pardon and salvation to you, and *to bless you, every one of you turning from your iniquities* [n]; in which, though by profession you are God's people, you have been so long indulging yourselves; nor are the vilest and most aggravated sinners among you excepted from the grace of such an invitation. Let it therefore be your most solicitous care, that this gracious message may not be addressed to you in vain.

SECT. vii.

Acts III. 25.

26

IMPROVEMENT.

HAPPY *the minister* whose heart is thus intent upon all opportunities of *doing good*, as these holy *apostles* were! Happy *that faithful servant*, who, like them, *arrogates nothing to himself*, but centres *the praise of all* in him who is the great source from whom *every good and perfect gift proceeds!* Happy the man who is *himself* willing to be *forgotten* and *overlooked*, that *God* may be *remembered* and *owned!* He, like this *wise master builder*, will *lay the foundation* deep in a sense of *sin*, and will *charge it* with all its aggravations *on the sinner*, that he may thereby render *the tidings* of a Saviour *welcome;* which they can never be till *this burden* has been felt. Yet will he, like Peter, conduct the charge with

Ver. 12 13 15

m *To you first.*] Accordingly the gospel was (by the astonishing grace of our blessed Redeemer) every where offered *first* to the Jews. Had it been otherwise, humanly speaking, many who were converted in this method might have been exasperated and lost.

n *Every one of you turning from your iniquities.*] That is, All those of you that turn from sin, shall be intitled to his blessing. This, which is just equivalent to Beza's, seems a natural version of the words ιν τω αποστρεφειν εκαστον, &c. And I choose it, because it is plain, (as Orobio with his usual sagacity objects to Limborch,) that Christ did not in fact *turn every one of them from their iniquities*, though it must be allowed, that he took such steps as were very proper for that purpose: and the *version* seems farther preferable, as the *apostle* knew, that the Jews would in fact *reject the gospel*, and bring destruction on themselves as a nation by that means.

SECT. VII. with *tenderness* and *respect*, and be cautious *not to overload* even the greatest offender.

Ver. 19 We see the absolute necessity of *repentance*, which therefore is to be solemnly charged upon the consciences of all who desire that their *sins may be blotted out* of the book of God's remembrance, and that they may share in *that refreshment* which nothing but the sense of his pardoning love can afford. Blessed souls are they who have experienced it; for they may look upon all their present comforts as the dawning of eternal glory; and having *seen* 20, 21 *Christ* with an eye of faith, and received *that important cure*, which nothing but his powerful and gracious *name* can effect, may be assured that *God will send him again* to complete the work he has so graciously begun, and to reduce the seeming *irregularities* of the present state into everlasting harmony, order, and beauty.

18 In the mean time, let us adore the wisdom of *his providence*, and the fidelity of *his grace*, which has *over-ruled* the folly and wickedness of men, to subserve *his own holy purposes*, and has 22 *accomplished the promises* so long since made of *a prophet to be raised up to Israel like Moses*, and indeed gloriously superior to him, both in the dignity of his character and office, and in the 26 great salvation he was sent to procure.—This salvation was *first* offered to *Israel*, which had rendered itself so peculiarly unworthy 15 by *killing the Prince of life*. Let us rejoice that it is now published *to us*, and that *God* has condescended to *send his Son* to *bless us* sinners of the Gentiles, *in turning us from our iniquities*. Let us view this salvation in its true light, and remember that if we are not willing to *turn from iniquity*, from *all iniquity*, from *those iniquities* that have been peculiarly *our own*, it is impossible we should have any share in it.

SECT. VIII.

The two apostles being seized by order of the Sanhedrim, and examined by them, courageously declare their resolution of going on to preach in the name of Jesus, notwithstanding their severest threatnings. Acts IV. 1—22.

Acts IV. 1.

SECT. VIII. THUS it was that Peter and John improved the opportunity of addressing themselves to the multitude, who had assembled in the temple (as we have seen before) upon occasion of the miraculous cure of the lame man; *and while they were* thus *speaking to the people*, a considerable number of *the priests came upon them; and*

Acts IV. 1. (as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them,

and with the priests there came *the captain of the temple*, that is, the person who commanded the guard of Levites then in waiting [a]; *and the Sadducees* also joined with them: For this sect of men were greatly exasperated against the apostles, *being* peculiarly *grieved that they taught the people* in the name of that Jesus whom they had so lately put to death, *and* especially that they *preached* the doctrine of *the resurrection from the dead*, as exemplified and demonstrated *in* [*the person of*] *Jesus*; whose recovered life had so direct a tendency to overthrow the whole system of the Sadducean tenets, which denied every thing of that kind, yea even the existence of the soul after death, and any future account of the actions of life. (Compare Acts xxiii. 8.)

2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now even-tide.

And therefore, that they might 3 prevent their preaching any more, *they laid* violent *hands upon* Peter and John, and seized *them* as seditious persons, who were labouring to incense the populace against the conduct of their governors; *And* they *committed them into custody until the next day*, that when the Sanhedrim met at the usual hour they might consult what it was proper to do with them; *for it was now* late in the *evening* [b], and was no fit season to have them examined.

4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word, believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

But in the mean time, the disciples had the 4 satisfaction to see, that the apostles had not laboured in vain; for *many of those, who had heard the word* preached by them, *believed; and the number of the men became about five thousand*, including those who had been converted before, and still attended on the instructions of the apostles [c].

And

a *The captain of the temple.*] See *note e* on Luke xxii. 52, p. 358.

b *It was now* late in the *evening*.] As Peter and John went up to the temple at *three in the afternoon*, this expression makes it probable, *some hours* might be spent *in preaching* to the people, and consequently, that what we have in the *former chapter* is only *an abstract* or *specimen* of the discourses they held on this occasion; which I suppose is generally the case, as to the *speeches* recorded by the *sacred historians*, as well as others.

c *The number—became about five thousand*, &c.] Dr. Benson concludes, that *five thousand* were *converted* on this occasion, besides the *three thousand* mentioned before, (chap. ii. 41.) Had it been said, as there, that so many *were added to the church*, it had determined the sense to be, as he and others understand it: (See Lightfoot and Whitby *in loc.*) But I think the use of the word γινομαι here, (whereas προστιθημι is used chap. i. 15.) favours the interpretation I have preferred. It is hardly to be thought, (unless it were expressly asserted) that *another day* should be so much more remarkable for its *number of converts*, than that on which *the Spirit* descended. And, as for any argument drawn from the probability of more than *five thousand* being converted *in a year's time*, I must observe, that I see no proof at all, that this event was *a year*, or even *a month* after the *descent of the Spirit*: nay, I rather think it highly improbable the *Sanhedrim* should suffer the *apostles* to go on

so

SECT. viii.

Acts IV. 5, 6.

And the next day there was a general assembly of *their rulers, and elders, and scribes*, which constituted the Sanhedrim, who *gathered together*, and formed a court *at Jerusalem: And* there was with them *Annas*, who had formerly been *the high priest, and Caiaphas* also who then bore that office [d], *and John, and Alexander* [e], *and as many as were of the high-priest's kindred* [f], who came and joined the council upon this occasion.

5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,

6 And Annas the high-priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high-priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

7 *And having* ordered the apostles to be brought before them, and *set them in the midst* of the assembly, (the place where criminals used to stand to be tried by their court,) *they inquired* of them, saying, Declare to us truly, and without reserve, what is the bottom of this affair? *By what power, or in* the authority of *what name, have you done this* strange work, which has been wrought on the cripple now healed? Is it by the art of medicine, or by magic? Or do you pretend to any prophetic mission, in attestation of which this is done?

7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name have ye done this?

Then

so long unquestioned in their public work; and to suppose they did not teach publicly would be most absurd.

d *Annas the high-priest, and Caiaphas.*] As it seems evident, that Caiaphas was *the high-priest* at this time, it may appear strange, that the title should be given to another, merely to signify that *he*, that is, the *Annas* spoken of, was *that Annas* who had once borne that office with great honour, and had now most of the authority, though his son-in-law Caiaphas had the name.—I would submit it to examination, whether, placing *a comma* after Αννας, the following words might not be joined, τον αρχιερεα και Καιαφαν, and rendered *the high-priest also*, that is, *Caiaphas*; though I confess the insertion of *copulatives* between each name in the following clauses does not favour *such a version*: and therefore I rather incline to acquiesce in the former solution; for the illustration of which, see Mr. Biscoe, at *Boyle's Lect.* p. 648—659.

e *John and Alexander.*] It is very evident, these were *persons of great note* among the Jews at that time: and it is not improbable, that (as Dr. Lightfoot and others suppose) the *former* might be the celebrated *Rabban Jochanan Ben Zaccai*, mentioned in the *Talmud*, the scholar of *Hillel*, and that the *latter* might be the *Alabarch*, or governor of the Jews at Alexandria, brother to the famous Philo Judæus, and in great favour with Claudius Cæsar. Josephus mentions him often, and tells us, among other things, that he adorned nine gates of the temple with plates of gold and silver. *Joseph. Bell. Jud. lib.* v. *cap.* 5, [al. vi. 6.] § 3.

f *As many as were of the high-priest's kindred.*] Or as others render it, *of the pontifical family.* Dr. Hammond explains this of the *twenty-four members* of the *Aaronic family*, who presided over the *twenty-four courses*: Others refer it to those, who were *nearly related* to Annas and Caiaphas: But Grotius thinks that it includes the *kindred* of those who had lately been in the office of *high-priest*, which (he says) made them *members* of the *Sanhedrim.* Who were properly *members* of that *council*, it is extremely difficult to say; but I cannot think with a late learned writer, (Mr. Biscoe, at *Boyle's Lect.* p. 79.) that the presence of Alexander (though statedly resident in Egypt) will prove, that this was not properly *the Sanhedrim*, but an *extraordinary council* occasionally called, consisting of some who were, and others who were not, of that court. It is very evident, they act with authority as *a court of judicature* here, and the *council*, expressly called Συνεδριον, again and again in the 5th chapter, (ver. 21, 27, 34, 41.) refer to the acts of *this assembly* as their own: (Compare chap. v. ver. 27, 28.) And the same word is likewise used here in *this* chapter, ver. 15.

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them; Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

Then Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, according to the promise of his now glorified Master, which was upon this occasion remarkably verified, (compare Mat. x. 19, 20. and Mark xiii. 11.) spake with the utmost freedom, and *said unto them, O ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,* before whom we are now brought as malefactors! We are not conscious to ourselves, 9 that we have done any thing to deserve censure or punishment; but *if we are this day examined* and called to an account as criminals, *about the benefit conferred upon the impotent man,* and you would have us to declare *by what means he is* saved from his calamitous state, and *healed* in the manner which you now see, we are most free to tell you what we before have testified on this occasion: (Chap. iii. 16:) *Be it known* 10 therefore *to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that* it is *by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you* a few weeks ago *crucified* with all the marks of detestation and contempt, as a criminal worthy of the most infamous death, but *whom God* hath owned, in that he *hath raised* him *from the dead*[g], and received him to glory: [*Yea,*] I declare it again, and will abide by it whatever be the consequence, that it is *by him,* even by that illustrious name of his, that *this* poor *man,* whom you well know to have been a cripple from his mother's womb, now *stands before you* perfectly *sound* and well. And give 11 me leave, Sirs, to tell you, that this Jesus is a person, with whom you are all intimately concerned; for as David expresses it, (Psal. cxviii. 22,) "*This is the stone which was* contemptuously refused and *set at nought by you,* who by your office should have been *builders* in the church of God, *that is* indeed *become the* very *head of the corner,* to which the whole building owes its strength, its union, and its beauty." *And there is* really *salvation* and healing *in no* 12 *other* but in him; *neither is there any other name under heaven, given* out by God *among* the children of *men,* whether of patriarch or prophet, or priest or king, *in which we must be*

9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12 Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

[g] *Whom God hath raised from the dead.*] They knew in their own consciences, that it was so; and, though they had *hired the soldiers* to tell a most senseless and incredible tale to the contrary, (Mat. xxviii. 12—15) yet it is observable, they did not (so far as we can learn) dare to plead it before Peter and John.

SECT. viii.

Acts IV. 12.

be saved and recovered[h]: For though we are not thus disabled and afflicted in body, yet there are other maladies of a much more threatening nature, for the cure of which you and I, and all that hear me this day, must, as we value the very lives of our souls, apply to Jesus, and only to him.

13 *Now when they* of the council *saw the boldness of Peter and John,* and observed the freedom of speech with which they pleaded their Master's cause, and the high degree to which they extolled him, in the presence of those magistrates who had so lately condemned him to the most shameful death; *and understood* at the same time *that they were illiterate men, and in private stations of life*[i], *they were* greatly *astonished. And* upon farther recollection too *they knew them,* and remembered of those two disciples, *that they had been with Jesus,* particularly the night that he was taken, and had attended him to the house of Caiphas, where several now in court had been present at his examination[k]. (Compare John xviii. 15, 16.)

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

14 *And* they would gladly have done their utmost to confound a testimony which bore so hard upon themselves. But *seeing the man that was cured,* whom they knew to have been so long lame, now *standing with them* perfectly recovered, *they had nothing to say against* the fact, though they were most unwilling to own a doctrine which [*it*] tended so strongly to prove.

14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

But

h *In which we must be saved.*] Dr. Whitby and some later writers have taken a great deal of pains to prove, that σωθηναι here signifies *healing,* and have argued for it from the *connection,* and from many *texts,* especially in the *Evangelists,* where it plainly has that sense, as it has likewise, Acts xiv. 9, where it is translated *to be healed.* (See Mat. ix. 21, 22; Mark v. 23; vi. 56; x. 52; Luke xvii. 19; and compare note d on Mark v. 28, Vol. VI. p. 378) But it is strange, that any should not have seen, that, if the most determinate word for *healing* had been here used, (as διασωθηναι, or ιασθαι,) it must have signified *spiritual* and *eternal salvation,* since it is plain, that, when Peter says, εν ω δει σωθηναι ημας, he takes it for granted, that *all who heard him* needed to apply to Christ for this *healing:* Now there is no reason to believe, they were *all afflicted* with bodily maladies, nor could he have any imaginable warrant to promise them all *supernatural recovery* in that case.——Raphelius in a remarkable *note* on this text, (ex *Herod.* p. 329—332,) endeavours among other things to prove, that ονομα, or *the name of a person,* was a manner of speaking used in reference to one regarded as *God,* and the *Author of salvation.*

i *Illiterate men, and in private stations of life.*] The original words αγραμματοι και ιδιωται have literally this signification, that they were *not scholars,* nor in any *public rank of life* as the *priests* and *magistrates* were; but they import no want of natural good sense, or any *ignorance* of what was then the subject of debate: so that *our translation* seems very unhappy here.

k *They knew them that they had been with Jesus,* particularly the night that he was taken, &c.] See note g on Luke xxii. 57, p. 363.——Grotius justly observes also, that *the rulers* were often *present* when Christ taught publicly, and so might have seen Peter and John near him *at other times,* as well as on the occasion mentioned in the *paraphrase.*

l *Never-*

15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves.

16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? For that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them, *is* manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*.

17 But that it spread no farther among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

But as they did not choose the apostles should perceive they knew not what to say, *having ordered them to withdraw* for a while *out of* the room where *the council* was sitting, *they* privately *conferred among themselves, Saying, What* 16 *shall we do with these men?* It would be neither reasonable nor safe to punish them now; *for that indeed a* very surprising and *signal miracle hath been wrought by them, is* clearly *manifest to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and we* ourselves *cannot* possibly *deny* [*it.*] *Nevertheless*[l] on the 17 other hand, it is equally plain, that both our credit and our interest require us, to suppress the rumour of it as much as we can; and therefore *that it may not any farther spread among the people,* and be a means of raising discontent, and perhaps of occasioning some dangerous insurrection among them, which may throw the city and nation into confusion, *let us severely threaten them* with the most rigorous punishment, in case they persist in such bold discourses as those we have now been hearing, *that* so *they* may not dare to preach as they have done, and from henceforth may *speak no more to any man in this* obnoxious *name.*

18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus.

And the whole council *having* agreed to this 18 as the most proper method they could at present take with the apostles, they *called them* in again, and telling them how much they were offended at the liberty they took, *they charged them* in a very strict and severe manner, *that,* upon pain of their highest displeasure, and as they regarded their own safety, and even their lives, *they should not* presume on any account whatever to *speak any more, or* to *teach* the people *in the name of Jesus*[m]; if they would not be looked upon as seditious persons, and be dealt with as incendiaries and rebels, as their master had been; whom they still asserted to have deserved the punishment that he had suffered.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto

But Peter and John felt themselves animated 19 in this arduous circumstance with a courageous zeal,

l *Nevertheless.*] Instances in which αλλα signifies *Nevertheless,* are numerous in the *New Testament;* and it is often rendered so by *our translators.* See Mark xiv. 36; John xi. 15; Rom. v. 14; 2 Cor. xii. 16; Gal. iv. 30; 2 Tim. i. 12; And many instances from *profane writers* are brought by Elsner in his note here.

m *They charged them that they should not speak any more——in the name of Jesus.* The very thing, that men conscious of the truth of the *apostle's* testimony, and self-condemned, would do; attempting by violence to *stop their mouths,* as they knew they could not answer them any other way.

SECT. VIII.

zeal, which would not permit them to be silent, lest that silence should be interpreted as a promise to quit their ministry, and therefore *answering them* with an undaunted freedom, they *said* before them all, *Whether it be* a fit or a *righteous* thing *in the sight of God*, to whom we are all accountable, *to obey you rather than God, judge ye*[n]. You cannot but know in your own consciences on which side the superior obligation lies; and you must therefore expect, that we shall act accordingly. *For* though we respect you as our civil rulers, and are heartily willing to yield all subjection to you so far as we lawfully can, yet since God hath charged us with the publication of this important message, on which, as we have already testified, the eternal salvation of men depends, *we* dare not to be silent in a case of such importance, and are free to tell you that we *cannot but speak the things which we have* so often *seen and heard*, and which God hath so miraculously impowered us to declare, not only in this city, but throughout all the earth.

[Acts IV. 19.] unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

21 *And* though the apostles spake with such great freedom, the council were so confounded by the force of truth, that they did not think fit to proceed to any further extremities at that time; but *having threatened them again* in severer terms than before, *they dismissed them; finding nothing* done by them *for which they might* with any shew of reason *punish them*, and not daring to proceed in so arbitrary a manner as they would otherwise have done, *because of the people*, whose resentment they feared: *For* such was the impression that was made upon the people by the cure of the lame man, that *they* had all an high esteem and mighty veneration for the apostles, who were publicly known to be the instruments of working it, and *all glorified God* in raptures of astonishment for

21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

n *Whether it be righteous——to obey you rather than God, judge ye.*] As they professed to believe the being and infinite perfections of God, they must, on their own principles, easily see the absurdity of expecting obedience to their commands from *good men*, who believed themselves divinely commissioned. There is a passage which bears some resemblance to this, in the *apology* of Socrates as recorded by Plato, (*oper.* p. 23,) which appears to me among the finest of antiquity. When they were condemning him to death for teaching the people, he said, "O ye Athenians, I embrace and love you; but *I will obey God rather than you*; [πεισομαι δε τω Θεω μαλλον η υμιν,] and if you would dismiss me and spare my life, on condition that I should cease to teach my fellow-citizens, I would rather die a thousand times than accept the proposal." What are ten thousand subtilties of the ancient *philosophers*, when compared with a sentiment like this!

22 For the man was above forty years old on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

for that which was done: And indeed they well might be affected with it, *for the man on whom this miracle of healing was wrought, was more than forty years old:* so that hardly any thing could have appeared to human judgment to be a more desperate case, than so inveterate and confirmed a lameness; and yet he was (as we have already related) in one moment completely cured by the word of the apostles, and the power of their divine master operating with it.

IMPROVEMENT.

WE see, in the instance before us, the natural but detestable effects of *a proud, bigotted, overbearing temper,* even where it seems least excusable. The Sadducees themselves, though they believed *no future state of retribution,* yet persecuted the *apostles* as eagerly, as if *they,* like some other Jews, had expected to *merit heaven* by their severity to them. (Compare John xvi. 2.) Ver. 1—3

On the other side, it is delightful to observe *the zeal* and *courage,* with which Peter and John defended the cause of their *crucified Redeemer,* even in the presence of *those* by whom he had so lately been *condemned.* Thus can God *give power to the feeble, and increase the strength of them that have no might.* (Isa. xl. 29.) The testimony they bore is well worth our regarding. *There is salvation in no other, neither is there any other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,* O that *the ends of the earth* might hear and reverence *that name!* O that *thousands,* to whom it is *yet unknown,* may learn to build *all their hopes of salvation* upon it; and may we never be *ashamed* to own it, never *afraid* to adhere to it! May we *speak of it* with such a savour, may we *defend it* with such a zeal, that they who are round about us may *take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus,* and trace the genuine effects of our intimate acquaintance with him! 10, 11 12 13

Never was there an instance of a more memorable *combat* between the force of *evidence* and of *prejudice;* never a more impudent *attempt* to bear down the cause of unquestionable *truth* by brutal *violence.* But *great is the truth, and it will prevail.* May the *ministers of the gospel* never want *that courage* in the defence of t which these *holy men* expressed; always *judging it* infinitely more reasonable, more safe, and more necessary, *to obey God than man!* Never may we be *ashamed* to profess our reverence and love to him, who is our supreme ruler, and our most bountiful friend; and may he give us such an inward and heart-influencing sense of the worth and sweetness of *his gospel,* as may effectually prevent our *betraying* or *neglecting* it! 16—18 19

SECT.

SECT. IX.

Peter and John return to their company, and having told them what had passed, they all unite in an inspired prayer, *which is attended with a renewed* effusion of the Spirit, *in consequence of which they all preach the gospel with new vigour and wonderful success; the number of converts, and the sales of estates, are greatly increased.* Acts IV. 23—35.

Acts IV. 23.

SECT. IX.

Acts IV. 23.

PETER *and* John *being dismissed* from their examination by the Sanhedrim, with a strict charge that they should preach no more in the name of Jesus, no sooner were at liberty but *they came to their own company, and related all that the chief priests and elders had said to them,* and how severely they had threatened them.

24 *And when they heard* [*it,*] a divine inspiration came upon all that were present in an extraordinary manner, so that *they* immediately *lifted up their voice with one accord to God*[a] in the following prayer, which upon this occasion was suggested by the Holy Spirit to every one in the assembly; *and* they *said,* O thou supreme *Lord* of universal nature, we humbly acknowledge *thou art the God who didst make heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them:*

25 *Who didst* by thine Holy Spirit *say by the mouth of thy servant David,* (Psal. ii. 1, 2.) "*Why did the heathen* nations *rage, and the people imagine vain things,* forming projects which must certainly end in their own disappointment and

26 ruin? Why did *the kings of the earth* enter into a confederacy to *set themselves* as it were in hostile array, *and* why were *the rulers* of it, forgetting their mutual differences, *combined together* in one association *against the Lord, and against his Messiah,* whom he hath anointed

Acts IV. 23.

AND being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

24 And when they heard *that,* they lift up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou *art* God which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the Heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

[a] *When they heard* [*it*] *they* immediately *lifted up their voice,* &c.] It is strange any should have imagined, this was *a precomposed form,* since, besides all the other absurdities of such a supposition, it so expressly *refers* to the *threatenings* of the *Sanhedrim, (ver.* 29) of which they had been but just then informed: and the words ακουσαντες ομοθυμαδον ηραν φωνην will not allow us to imagine *any interval,* between the report of Peter and John, and this *prayer.* I conclude it therefore probable, that *all their voices* might join by *immediate inspiration;* which seems a circumstance graciously adapted for the *encouragement of the all* to suffer the greatest extremities in his cause, and answers the *phrase* here used much better, than if we were to suppose *one only* to have spoken, and *the rest* to have put their cordial *amen* to it; which yet would be a much more tolerable account of the matter, than that which I first mentioned.

[b] *Have*

SECT. ix.

Acts IV. 27.

27 For of a truth against thy Holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

ed to be the great ruler of all?" We, O God, have now seen the literal accomplishment of these words; *for of a truth* here has been a most audacious conspiracy in this city of Jerusalem, where we now are, *against* thee, and against *thine holy child Jesus, whom thou hast* so visibly *anointed* with the Holy Ghost and with power, to accomplish the glorious work of erecting thy kingdom among men; and *both Herod* the tetrarch, *and Pontius Pilate* the Roman governor, *with the heathen, and the people of Israel, have combined* in the impious attempt:

28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

But it is our unspeakable comfort to think, that by their utmost rage they cannot break in upon thy schemes, or prevent the efficacy of any of thy purposes; for we know that in the midst of all this impious fury they have shewn against thy Son, they have only been able *to do what thine hand* had pointed out before, *and* what *thy* unerring *counsel*, to which all future events are obvious, *had before determined*, that for wise reasons thou wouldst permit *to be done*[b]. 28

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

And as to what *now* remains to accomplish this important scheme of raising thy church on the sure foundation of his cross, we beseech thee, *O Lord*, to *regard* these *their* haughty *threatenings*, with which they are endeavouring to discourage the chosen witnesses of his resurrection; *and* to *give unto* these *thy servants*, and to all others that are to join their testimony, *to speak thy word with all freedom* and resolution[c], in the midst of the most violent opposition that can arise: 29

[b] *Have combined to do, &c.*] Limborch (*Theolog.* lib. ii. cap. 30, § 17) contends strongly for *a transposition* of the words thus: "They have combined against thine Holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed to do what thine hand and thy counsel had determined, &c." But this transposition is arbitrary; and it is so expressly said elsewhere by Luke, when he was entering on his sufferings, that *the Son of man went as it was determined* concerning him, (Luke xxii. 22,) and it so plainly appears in fact, that these circumstances were *expressly determined* or marked out in the prophecies of the *Old Testament*, that I see not what end the admission of *such a transposition* would answer. It is much more rational (as we observed in *note* i on that text in Luke, p. 287,) to explain *this determination* in such a manner, as to make it consistent with the *free agency* of the persons concerned. When *God's hand and his counsel* are said to have *determined these things*, it may signify God's having *pointed out* this great event so wisely concerted in his eternal counsels, and *marked beforehand* as it were *all the boundaries* of it (as the word προωρισε may well signify,) in the prophetic writings. This seems more natural, than to suppose, (as Bishop Pearson and Dr. Hammond do,) that it alludes to *the designation of the Lord's goat* on the day of expiation, which was by lifting up *the lot* on high, and then laying it on the head of the animal to be sacrificed. See *Pears. on the Creed*, p. 185, and *Hamm. in loc.*

[c] *Give unto thy servants to speak thy word with all freedom.*] Elsner has shewn here, by some very happy *quotations*, that several of the Heathens acknowledged the [παρρησια] *freedom of speech* on great and pressing occasions, to be *a divine gift*. Compare Prov. xvi. 1.

[d] *They*

ACT. IX. arise: Especially *whilst thou art* animating them by the performance of such works of power and mercy, and art *stretching out thine* own almighty *hand for healing* the most incurable distempers; *and* while such astonishing *signs and wonders* as these *are done by the name of thine holy child Jesus*; which we hope thou wilt still continue to perform, however the rage of the enemy may be excited by them.

Acts IV. 30.

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy Holy Child Jesus.

31 *And while they were* thus *praying*, God was pleased miraculously to declare his gracious acceptance of their petitions: for *the place in which they were assembled was shaken*, as the upper room had been on the day of Pentecost, (Acts ii. 2.) *and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit*[d]: *And* being animated by that strong impulse, which through his operation they felt upon their hearts, *they spake the word of God* wherever they came *with* all courageous *freedom*, and renewed their public testimony without any appearance of fear, on the very day on which they had been so solemnly forbidden by the Sanhedrim to preach any more in the name of Jesus.

31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

32 *And* that sacred agent wrought upon their souls not only as the spirit of zeal and courage, but of love, so that *the very heart and soul of the* whole *multitude of believers*, numerous as they were, *was all one: Nor did any one* [*of them*] *call any of his possessions his own; but all things were common amongst them*[e], and each was as welcome to participate of them as the original proprietor could be, being in these new bonds of Christian fellowship as dear to him as himself. *And with great power*, that is, with a divine force of eloquence and of miracles, *did the apostles give forth their* important *testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all*[f], so that the energy and sweetness of the gospel was felt by the inward experience both of speakers and hearers, beyond what it was possible for words to express.

32 And the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them*, that ought of the things which he possessed, was his own, but they had all things common.

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

Neither

[d] *They were all filled with the Holy Spirit.*] I will not assert, that *cloven tongues* fell upon them again; but I think it probable, with Dr. Benson, that some *visible symbol* of the *Spirits' descent* might now be given.

[e] *All things were common amongst them.*] See notei on chap. ii. 44. p. 524. *To have one heart and soul* is a proverbial expression for the most intimate and endearing friendship, as Elsner and others have shewn.

[f] *Great grace was upon them all.*] Casaubon, Grotius, and some others, understand this of *the favour* they had *among the people* on account of their charity and good conduct: But this is by no means the natural import of *this phrase*, which is very different from that used, Acts ii. 47. Sect. viii. p. 525.

SECT. IX.

34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands, or houses, sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

35 And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

Neither was there any one indigent person among them, though many of them were far from their habitations, and many others in low circumstances of life: *for as many as were proprietors of lands or houses, sold them* as fast as they could find any to purchase them, *and brought the price of the things they* had *sold,* whether it were more or less, *And laid* [*it*] *down at the feet of the apostles,* to be disposed of as they should direct; who discharged their trust with the strictest fidelity, *and* took care that *distribution was made to every one according as any had need* for his present relief: (Compare chap. ii. 45:) The apostles esteeming themselves sufficiently happy, while living in the same plain manner with their brethren, in the opportunity which the divine goodness gave them of being so helpful to others both in temporals and spirituals.

Acts IV. 34. 35

IMPROVEMENT.

THIS was indeed *the golden age* of the *church;* and it is impossible to trace the memoirs of it, if we *love Sion,* without a secret complacency and exultation of mind. How amiable and how venerable do the *apostles* and *primitive converts* appear, in this native *simplicity* of the *Christian* character! and what a glory did *the grace* and *Spirit of God* put upon them, far beyond all that human establishments, splendid dignities, or ample revenues, could ever give to those that have succeeded them! While *the multitude of them had one heart and one soul,* and each was ready to *impart to his brethren* whatever he himself possessed, how high a relish of *pleasure* did they receive, and how were *their joys* multiplied by each of their number!

Ver. 13 32

Thus does *divine grace,* when it powerfully enters into the heart, open it in sentiments of *generosity* and *love.* Thus does it conquer that *selfish temper* which reigns so frequently in the minds of sinful men, and makes them like *wild beasts,* rather than like *brethren* to each other. Providence does not indeed call us *entirely to give up our possessions,* or to introduce *a community of goods* among *Christians,* in circumstances so different from those which we have now been surveying. Yet surely it is always *our duty,* and will be *our highest interest,* to remember that we are *not original proprietors* of what we possess, but *stewards,* who are to manage what is intrusted to our care, for the *honour of our great Master,* and the *good of his family* here on earth; continually ready to *resign any part* or even *the whole of it,* whenever these important ends shall require such a resignation.

33–55

SECT. IX.

In the mean time, let us frequently *lift up our hearts*, to the great and ever blessed *God*, who hath *made heaven and earth, and*
24 *the sea, and all that is in them*, that he would support and extend the progress of *that gospel* in the world, which he hath so graci-
25, 26 ously begun to plant. *Kings* may still *set themselves*, and *rulers take counsel* against it; but he knows how to turn *their counsels* into *foolishness*, and *their rage* into *shame*. He hath *anointed Jesus* his holy child *with the oil of gladness*, and placed him *on his throne* in heaven; and all the united malice and fury of *his enemies* can do no more, than what shall make part of *his wise* and *gracious scheme* for the government of his people. Let us *pray*, that he would *give freedom of speech* to all employed in pleading
29 his cause; and that he will plentifully *anoint them* with the *effusion of his Spirit*: And let the *signs and wonders* which were *done*
30, 31 *by the name of Jesus* in former ages, encourage us to hope that he will never *totally desert a scheme* which he once so illustriously interposed to establish; and consequently let them animate us to *exert ourselves* in his service, whatever *labours, threatenings*, or *dangers* may meet us in our way!

SECT. X.

The sale of estates proceeding, Ananias and Sapphira attempt fraudulently to impose upon the apostles, *and are immediately struck dead. That event, together with other extraordinary miracles wrought about the same time, promotes the increase of the church more and more.* Acts IV. 36. *to the end.* V. 1—16.

ACTS IV. 36.

SECT. X.

Acts IV. 36.

AMONG the rest of those primitive converts, who so generously contributed of their substance for the relief *and* subsistence of the poor believers in so extraordinary a circumstance, there was one *Joses, who*, on account of his great benevolence and usefulness, was much respected in the church, and *by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which being interpreted* from the Syriac language, *signifies a son of consolation*[a]: He was *a Levite*, who was so far from

ACTS IV. 36.

AND Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus,

[a] *Joses—surnamed Barnabbas—a son of consolation.*] Considering how common the names of Joses and Joseph were, there seems no just reason to conclude, as some have done, that *this* was the Joseph mentioned chap. i. 23. as a candidate for the office of an *apostle*. (Comp. note i. p. 505, on that text.)—Nor can I see any reason to conclude with Abp. Wake, (*Apost. Fathers, Introd.* p. 62.) that this Joses was called *a son of consolation*, to express *the great consolation* the brethren received from the *sale of his estate*. The name seems rather to refer to his *extraordinary abilities* for the *ministerial work*, and to those *gifts of the Spirit*, whereby he was enabled both to *comfort*, and to *exhort*, as the word also signifies.—Mr. Fleming makes

from being prejudiced against this new religion, as it might seem to oppose his temporal interest, that he gladly devoted himself to its service: [*and*] was a native of another country, being *by birth a Cyprian:* And *having an estate* which was capable of being alienated without any transgression of the law [b], he *sold it, and brought the money*, as others had done, *and laid it down at the feet of the apostles* [c], desiring they would dispose of it in such a manner, as might be most serviceable to the necessities of the saints: And the addition which it made to the public stock was so considerable, that it seemed to deserve this particular mention. SECT. X. Acts IV. 36. 37 Having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

But it is in a very different point of light and on a very melancholy occasion, that we are obliged to mention another person before we leave this story. There was also among these early professors of the gospel *a certain man named Ananias*, who *with* the concurrence of *Sapphira his wife, sold an estate; And* fraudulently *secreted part of the price. his wife also being conscious* [*of it;*] *and bringing* only *a certain part* of it, *he laid it down at the feet of the apostles*, as the rest did, pretending that it was the whole of the purchase-money; and consequently intimating, that having deposited his all in their hands, he should hope for the future, to be taken care of among the rest of the brethren. Acts V. 1. Acts V. 1. But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy *to it*, and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet. 3

But, upon this, the Holy Spirit, under whose direction the apostle *Peter* acted, immediately suggested to him the fraud, and the awful manner in which the Divine Wisdom saw fit to animadvert upon it: In consequence of which inward suggestion, looking sternly upon him, he *said*, 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

makes it a most honourable title indeed, as signifying, *a son of the operation of the Paraclet*, that is, *of the Holy Ghost.*

b *An estate*, which was capable of being alienated, &c.] He could not have sold that which was *his paternal inheritance* as a Levite: But *this* might perhaps be *some legacy* or *purchase of land* in Judea, to which he might have a title till the next *Jubilee*, or perhaps some land in Cyprus: and we may suppose it mentioned, either as the first *foreign estate* sold, or as of some *extraordinary value.*

c *Laid it down at the feet of the apostles.*] Orobio insinuates, *apud Limborch. Collat.* p. 134. (and it is one of the weakest and meanest things I remember in his writings) that it was no small advantage to *poor fishermen* to be *treasurers* of so considerable a bank. But nothing can be more unjust and unnatural, than to suspect, that men, who were so ready to *sacrifice their lives* to the cause of truth and the happiness of mankind, should be capable of *falsifying such a trust* as this, for the sake of a *little money.* Their miraculous powers were joined with a thousand marks of *probity* in their daily conduct to warrant *such a confidence*, which was but a natural token of due respect. We see in chap. vi. 2, 3, 4. how ready they were soon *to transfer the management* of this affair to other hands; and *the following story* furnishes us with an *additional answer* to this cavil, which is beyond all exception.

SECT. X

Acts V. 3.

said, O Ananias, why hath Satan through thine own wickedness in yielding to his temptations, *filled thine heart* with such a degree of covetousness, falsehood, folly and presumption, [*that thou shouldst* audaciously *attempt*] *to impose on the Holy Spirit* himself[d] under whose special direction we are; *and to secrete part of the price of the land* thou hast sold, when thou pretend-

4 est to have brought the whole? *While it remained* unsold, *did it not continue thine*, notwithstanding thy profession of faith in Jesus? *And when it was sold, was it not* still *in thine own power*[e]; to have given or not given the whole, or any part of it, into the treasury of the church, as thou shouldst think proper? *Why* then *hast thou admitted this thing into thine heart*, so meanly and so profanely to dissemble on this solemn occasion? *Thou hast not lied to men* alone, to us, or to the church, whose treasurers we are; *but* hast lied *to* the blessed *God* himself, who residing in us by his divine Spirit, is determined to make thee a terrible example of his displeasure for an affront so directly levelled at himself, in the midst of this astonishing train of his extraordinary operations.

4 Whilst it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 *And Ananias hearing these words*, while the sound of them was yet in his ears, *fell down and expired*[f]; that by his sad example all might learn

5 And Ananias hearing these words, fell down and gave up the Ghost;

d *Filled thine heart—to impose on the Holy Spirit.*] The Hebrews express a person's being *emboldened to do a thing*, by the phrase of *his heart being filled*: (Compare Esth. vii. 5. and Eccles. viii. 11.) And Bos has abundantly shewn, that Ψευσασθαι τινα signifies to *lye to a person*, or to *impose upon him*, (*Bos. Exercit.* p. 73, 74.) but I cannot recollect, that it ever signifies to *belye a person*, as Dr. Benson would here render it. *Hist. of Christianity*, Vol. I. p. 103.

e *When it was sold, was it not in thine own power?*] It evidently appears from hence, that no *Christian converts* were obliged to *sell their estates*. An answer to the *Popish argument* from hence, in favour of *works of supererogation*, may be collected from our *paraphrase* on Mat. xix. 12. p. 97.

f *Ananias—fell down and expired.*] This *severity* was not only *righteous*, considering that complication of vain-glory and covetousness, of fraud and impiety, which, as Limborch and Mr. Biscoe, (p. 659—661) have well proved, the action contained; but also on the whole, was *wise* and *gracious*, both as it served to vindicate the honour of *the blessed Spirit*, so notoriously affronted by this attempt to *impose on those*, who had been so lately and eminently *anointed* by his *extraordinary effusion*, and farther, as it tended most effectually to deter *any dishonest persons* from *joining the Christians*, merely for the sake of *a present aims*, to which, by a fraud like this, many might on easy terms have *purchased a pretence*, who would also, no doubt, have proved *a great scandal* to a profession taken up on such infamous motives, (Compare ver. 13) This likewise was a very convincing attestation of the *apostle's most upright conduct*, in the management of the sums, with which they were intrusted, and indeed in general, of their *divine mission*; for none can imagine, that Peter would have had the *assurance to pronounce*, and much less the power to execute such a sentence as this, if he had been at the same time *guilty* of a much baser fraud of the like kind, or had been *belying the Holy Ghost*, in the whole of his pretensions to be under

Ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*.

7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall carry thee out.

10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and carrying *her* forth buried *her* by her husband.

learn how dangerous it was to affront that divine Spirit under whose influence the apostles acted: *And* it answered its end, for *great fear came* not only on the immediate spectators, but *on all that heard* the report of *these things*. *Then* some of *the young* and able-bodied *men* in the assembly *arose, and* perceiving there was no room to hope for the recovery of one who was struck dead by such an immediate act of the divine power, they *bound him up* in his mantle, without any farther circumstance of mourning or delay, *and carrying him out, they buried him*.

SECT. X.

Acts V. 5.

6

And after the interval of about three hours, his wife Sapphira *also*, who was absent when this happened, *not knowing what was done, came in* to the place in which they were assembled. *And Peter* upon this occasion *said to her* before them all, *Tell me* freely, Sapphira, with that uprightness which becomes a disciple of Jesus, *whether you* indeed *sold the land* only *for so much* money, as you know your husband brought hither, naming the sum. *And she said, Yes*, it was sold exactly *for so much*. *Then Peter* by an immediate impulse of the same Spirit, which had before so awfully interposed, *said unto her* again, *How is it that you have* thus wickedly *conspired together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord*, as if you had really suspected, whether he were capable of discerning the affair or not, and were resolved to bring it to a trial? Alas, unhappy woman, it will appear to be a fatal experiment to you both: for *behold, the feet of those who have* just *been burying thy husband*, whom divine vengeance has already struck dead on this occasion, *are* even now *at the door* upon their return, *and they shall* forthwith *carry thee out*, and lay thee by him in the grave.

7

8

9

10

And immediately upon this, *she* also *fell down at his feet, and expired*[g]; *And the young men*, who were just then *coming in, found her* quite *dead* in a moment; *and* accordingly they *carried her out, and buried her by* Ananias *her husband*.

And

under his miraculous influence and direction.' See *Cradock's Apost. Hist.* p. 27. and *Reynold's Lett. to a Deist.* p. 245.

[g] *She* also *fell down—and expired.*] To what is said before in vindication of *this seeming severity*, in *note* [f], we may add, that *such exemplary punishment* of so heinous a crime was *the more expedient*, as *Christianity* was now *in its first rise*. So, just at the opening of the *Mosaic* institution, Nadab and Abihu were *struck dead* with lightning for a fault (as it seems) of much less aggravated guilt: (Lev. x. 1, 2.) and the wisest *human governments* generally act on the like principle.

[h] *None*

SECT. X.

Acts V. 11.

And great fear came upon all the assembly, who were eye-witnesses of what had passed, *and upon all* others *that heard* the report, which was soon spread abroad of *these things*; who could not but acknowledge, that it was the immediate hand of God by which they both died, and that he was just in this awful dispensation.

11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

12 *And many* other stupendous *signs and wonders were done among the people* in the most public manner, *by the hands of the apostles: And they* continued in the strictest fellowship, and union with the whole company of believers, and *were* frequently *all unanimously* together *in* that spacious building, which we have already mentioned by the name of *Solomon's portico*, conversing together with the most affectionate expressions

12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

13 of mutual endearment. *And none of the rest* who were not really converted to Christianity, *presumed to join himself to them* [h], as some mean spirited creatures might possibly otherwise have done for a while, in a low view of some transient advantage, by a share in the distributions that were made. *But* all *the people* had a mighty veneration for the apostles, and *magnified them* with the highest expressions of reverence and respect, as persons who were owned by God in

13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.

14 the most signal manner: *And* though the death of these two unhappy offenders terrified many from hypocritically joining their company, yet the success of the gospel was promoted, rather than hindered by it, so that great *multitudes both of men and women, believing* their testimony, *were* so much *the more* [*willingly*] *added* in a solemn manner *to* the church of *the Lord*, and made an open profession of their faith; wisely inferring from what had happened, how dangerous

14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

[h] *None of the rest presumed to join himself to them.*] Dr. Lightfoot explains this of *the rest* of the *hundred and twenty*, that they *durst not join to the twelve*, or equal themselves to the *apostles* in office or dignity: *(Lightf. Comment. in loc.)* But as there is no mention of that number in *this chapter*, so (as Dr. Whitby observes,) they never *joined themselves* before *to the apostles* in this sense; nor is this any where the meaning of the word κολλασθαι, which signifies to *associate*, or *unite with*, to *adhere* or *cleave to any*. (Compare Acts ix. 26. x. 28. xvii. 34.)——Beza would have it, that κολλασθαι signifies here to *attack* or *touch*, and that λοιπων, *the rest*, refers to *their powerful enemies* as distinguished from *the people*: But that signification of κολλασθαι is, as he acknowledges, *very unusual*, and is here *quite unnecessary*. —L'Enfant thinks the meaning is, that *persons of distinction* had not *the resolution to join them*, whatever inward conviction they might have as to the truth of their doctrine. But after all, it is most natural to understand it, as if it had been said, "*The people* held them in distant admiration, and *presumed not* on any false pretence *to join them*, if not truly converted to their religion;" which yet (as it appears by the *next verse,*) *many were*, who readily came into a full and solemn profession of it, as indeed *the late miracle* was a glorious, though dreadful, demonstration of its truth.

dangerous it would be to oppose or suppress the inward convictions of their minds, in a matter of so great importance. SECT. X.

15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

And they were farther animated to boldness in their profession, by the many gracious miracles which succeeded to this work of terror; *insomuch that* all *along the* most public *streets they brought out the sick, and laid them* at their doors *on beds and couches*, when they were not able to walk; *that at least the shadow of Peter* as he was *coming by, might overshadow some* or other *of them:* And this extraordinary faith was rewarded by the healing of many in that circumstance. Acts V. 15,

16 There came also a multitude *out* of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

And as the fame of these wonderful works spread abroad, *multitudes also* [*out*] *of the cities round about, came together to Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those that were troubled with unclean spirits; who*, by the divine power of Jesus working in his humble disciples, *were all healed;* as persons in the like circumstances had often been by Christ himself in the days of his flesh. So that the alarm which this gave to the enemies of the gospel, grew continually more and more painful to them, and occasioned some remarkable proceedings against the apostles, which will be related in the following section. 16

IMPROVEMENT.

LET us behold, with humble reverence, this awful instance of the *divine severity*, so well calculated to *impress the minds* of these *new converts*, and to *prevent* any of *those frauds*, which the charity of those who were most zealous in their profession might have occasioned in some others. Let us learn, how hateful *falsehood* is to *the God of truth*, and make it our care to avoid it; and not only shun *a direct lye*, but the taking undue advantage from any *ambiguities of expression*, and, in a word, all recourse to the arts of *equivocation*. God only knows, how soon such *treacherous lips* may be *sealed up* in eternal silence. Ver. 5, 11 4 5, 10

How does *Satan* delude *the heart* which he *fills!* And how peculiarly fatal is *the delusion*, when he leads men to sins, which especially *affront the Holy Spirit of God:* That *Spirit* rested on the *apostles*, and taught them to discover *the hidden things of darkness;* so that they who *tempted it*, fell in the attempt, and *became a sign.* May *integrity and uprightness* ever *preserve us!* (Psal. xxv. 21.) And, while we avoid all the kinds and arts of *dissimulation*, let us peculiarly detest *those*, which would offer a *double insult* to the 3 9

SECT. X. the God of heaven, by taking their dress from the *religion*, which his own Son has planted.

Ver. 13 The *church* is never *happier*, than when *the sons of falsehood* are *deterred* from intruding into it. If its *members* are *less numerous*, it is a sufficient balance, that it is *more pure*. We see what sin-
15, 16 gular *miracles* were *done by the apostles*; miracles *equal*, and in some respects, as it seems by these instances, *superior* to those which Christ performed in the days of his ministration here below. When will the happy time come, in which men shall express as great a concern *for their souls*, as they here did *for their bodies?* When shall *the streets* and *assemblies* be filled with those who, from a sense of their *spiritual maladies*, shall apply to the *ministers of Christ* for *healing?* Let it always be remembered, that whatever *they do* for this happy purpose, it is indeed *their master* that does it by them; and that *all their most assiduous applications*, separate from *his blessing*, can effect no more than *the shadow of Peter* could have done, if *the power of Christ* had not wrought on those over whom it passed.

SECT. XI.

The apostles continuing to preach to the people, are apprehended and imprisoned, and, after a miraculous deliverance, are brought before the Sanhedrim the next day, and scourged; Gamaliel's advice prevailing, to prevent any farther extremities. Acts v. 17, *to the end.*

Acts V. 17.

SECT. XI. IT was observed in the preceding section, what extraordinary miracles were done by the apostles in the name of Jesus, whom still, notwithstanding all the menaces of their rulers, they continued faithfully to preach, and to assure the people of his resurrection from the dead, and of eternal life to be obtained through him. *But* this, as it might reasonably be expected, drew another storm upon them: For *the high-priest arising*, as it were with awakened and renewed fury, *and all they that were with him, which was the sect of the Sadducees*[a], who were

Acts V. 17.

Acts V. 17. THEN the high-priest rose up and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation;

[a] *The sect of the Sadducees.*] There is no sufficient reason from this text to conclude with Grotius, that the *high-priests* and *his kindred* were *Sadducees*, though it is probable they might be so, as Josephus affirms that some of the *high-priests* were of *this sect*, and particularly Ananus, one of the sons of that Annas, who was father-in-law to Caiaphas. (See Mr. Biscoe, at *Boyle's Lect.* chap. v. § 4, p. 110, 111.) The *Sadducees* however would be most ready to exert themselves in persecuting the *apostles*, as they were most exasperated by their doctrine, which was directly opposite to the notions they maintained. See the *paraphrase* on Acts iv. 2, sect. 8, p. 537.

[b] *Into*

were especially devoted to his interest, and most offended at the doctrine of the resurrection, *were filled with* zeal and *indignation* against these men, who, as their enemies affected to represent it, made so dangerous an attack both on their religious and political establishment:

18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

18 *And* in support of these unjust charges, they were determined to bring them to another trial before the Sanhedrim, and for that purpose *laid their hands on the apostles, and put them into the common prison*, where the vilest of malefactors were lodged [b].

19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

19 *But* that God might evidently shew, how impotent all their rage was against those whom he determined to support, and that they might be emboldened with a becoming confidence to bear their testimony in the midst of oppositions and dangers, *an angel of the Lord* was sent to them, who, appearing in the midst of them *by night opened the doors of the prison, and* without giving any alarm to the keepers, or any of the other prisoners, *bringing them out* of that place of confinement, *said*, as God hath thus miraculously interposed for your deliverance, neither flee, not fear; but *go*, as soon as the gates are opened, *and presenting yourselves* boldly *in the temple*, as you did before you were seized, (however disagreeable the doctrine that you preach may be to those who believe nothing of a future state,) *speak to the people* assembled there at the hour of morning sacrifice *all the words of this* glorious gospel with which you are charged, on which the eternal *life* of men so evidently depends, and by which alone their final happiness can be secured.

20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people, all the words of this life.

21 And when they heard *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught—

21 *And* the apostles *hearing* [*this*] divine command, made no scruple immediately to obey it, and were so far from being discouraged by the fear of persecution, that with an earnest zeal to carry on the work they were engaged in, *they went very early into the temple, and taught* the people with the same freedom as before, who assembled there to pay their morning adorations unto God.

But

[b] *Into the common prison.*] That this was as the *paraphrase* expresses it, the place *where the vilest malefactors were lodged*, cannot be doubted. But it is not certain, *the apostles* were actually thrust among *them*; and I think ver. 23 makes it rather more probable, they were in an apartment *by themselves*.

SECT. XI.

Acts V. 21.

But in the mean time, *the high-priest being come, and they that were with him,* into the room where the council was usually held, *they called together* all the members of *the Sanhedrim, even* (as we have hinted several times before, that the name signifies,) *the whole senate of the children of Israel,* being solicitous that there might be as full a house as possible on so important an occasion: *And* when they were convened, they *sent* proper officers *to the* common *prison* to take charge of the apostles, and *to have them brought* into their presence, that the court might proceed to their examination and punishment.

—But the high-priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

22 *But when the officers came* thither, to their great surprise *they found them not in the prison;* and yet could not discover what way they had took to make their escape, considering the circumstances that appeared on inquiry. *Returning therefore* to the council, *they made their report,*

22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned and told,

23 *saying. We found indeed the prison shut with all* possible *safety, and the keepers standing without* as centinels *before the doors; but having opened* [*them,*] and gone into the place in which the prisoners had been put, and where we did not doubt but we should find them, to our great astonishment *we found no one within* of those whom we sought.

23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

24 *Now when the high priest, and the captain of the temple, and the* other *chief-priests* who were gathered together, *heard these words, they doubted concerning them,* and knew not *what* to think of it how *this could be;* that is, whether they had procured their liberty by corrupting the keepers, or whether there might not be something miraculous in the deliverance of persons whom such extraordinary circumstances

24 Now when the high-priest, and the captain of the temple, and the chief-priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

25 had attended. *But one,* who knew their disappointment and the uneasiness it gave them, *came* into the court, *and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put* yesterday *in prison, are* now *standing in the temple,* however they came thither, *and* are *teaching the people* assembled there with as much freedom and confidence as ever; which indeed does not look like a clandestine escape, which could only have been made with a view of flight and concealment.

25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison, are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

26 *Then the captain* of the temple *went with the officers* by the direction of the Sanhedrim, *and* having found the apostles in the temple, *brought them* away, but *not by violence, for they feared the*

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: (for they

Acts V. 26.

(they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.)

the people, lest if they had offered any violence in their presence, it might have so provoked them that *they should be stoned*[c]: For the people were so fully persuaded of a divine power engaged with the apostles, that they held their persons sacred, and would not have borne any open attack upon them: The apostles, on the other hand, were ready cheerfully to obey the summons, that they might repeat their testimony to their divine Master.

27 And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council: And the high-priest asked them,

And accordingly 27 the captain and those that attended him, *when they had brought them* to the place where the council was sitting, made a report of what *they* had done, and *set them before the Sanhedrim. And* as soon as they appeared, *the high-priest*, singling out Peter and John, who had so lately been examined before them, *asked them, Saying, Did we not strictly charge you* two in particular but a very little while ago, and so in effect all the rest of your company, *that you should not*, on pain of our highest displeasure and the utmost rigour of the law, *teach* any more *in this name* of Jesus of Nazareth? *And behold*, instead of regarding our admonition, or shewing any sense of the great lenity with which the court then treated you, you have been more busy and more daring than before in your seditious practices, so that *you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine; and* it all centres in this, that you *would bring* the odium of *this man's blood upon us*, and would incense the populace against us, as if he were an innocent person whom we had murdered: So that it is no thanks to you, if we are not stoned, or torn in pieces by them, for that act of necessary justice, for such it was, which we were obliged to do upon him.

28 Saying, Did not we strictly command you, that you should not teach in this name? And behold ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

29 Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

But Peter and [*the rest of*] *the apostles*, who 29 were now all before them, *answered and said* O ye senate of Israel, ye cannot but in your own consciences know, as we plainly declared before this assembly when we received the charge now referred to, (chap. iv. 19) that *it is* absolutely fit

[c] *They feared the people, lest they should be stoned.*] This may seem *a surprising change* in the people, considering the eagerness with which they demanded that *Christ should be crucified.* But it is exceeding probable, that, seeing the mighty power which wrought in the *apostles*, they might entertain some hope of obtaining *temporal deliverance* by their means, (compare Acts i. 6) of which they were so exceeding fond, and a disappointment in their hope of which had turned their *hosannahs* into the cry, *Crucify him, crucify him.* See Mr. Lardner's *Credibility*, Vol. 1. p. 179.

SECT. XI.

Acts V. 30.

fit and *necessary to obey* the almighty and ever blessed *God, rather than men*, be they ever so great and powerful. We assuredly know, and we testify it to you as we have been testifying it to the people, that *the God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus* his son, *whom ye slew* in the most infamous manner that ye could invent, *hanging him* crucified *on a tree*, as if he had been the meanest of slaves and the vilest of malefactors: But this very person, notwithstanding all the outrage with which you treated *him*, *hath God exalted at his* own *right hand* [*to be*] *a Prince and Saviour* to his people; *to give repentance*, or to send terms of peace and reconciliation by him, even *unto Israel*[d], by whom he hath been so ungratefully insulted and abused, *and* to bestow on those that shall repent the free and full *remission of* all their aggravated *sins*.

30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand, *to be* a prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

32 *And we are* appointed *his witnesses of these things*, how incredible soever they may appear to you; *and* so is *the Holy Spirit also, whom God hath given* not only to us the apostles, but also *to* many others of *them who submit* themselves *to his government*[e], most evidently attesting the same, and proving how absolutely necessary it is for every one, great and small, to lay aside prejudice and opposition, and with humble penitence to believe in Jesus.

32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

33 *And* the high-priest and the Sadducees, *when they heard* [*this*] courageous testimony and faithful remonstrance, were enraged beyond all measures of patience and of decency, so that *they* even *grinded their teeth at them*, like savage beasts that could gladly have devoured them; *and* with hearts full of rancour they immediately

33 When they heard *that*, they were cut *to the heart*, and took

d *To give repentance unto Israel.*] As *repentance* was not actually wrought in Israel by the efficacious grace of Christ, I think it evident, that δοναι μετανοιαν here signifies *to give place* or *room for repentance*, just as *the same phrase* does in Josephus, (*Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 8, [al. 6,] § 7,) where he says, that the Jews rising up at Cæsarea in a tumultuous manner, the wiser people among them went to intercede with the governor δουναι μετανοιαν τοις πεπραγμενοις, *i. e.* to publish a pardon to those who should lay down their arms; agreeable to the turn given to the expression in the paraphrase.

e *The Holy Spirit also, whom God hath given to them that submit*, &c.] The testimony arising from this miraculous *communication of the Spirit* to *Christians* at that time, entirely removes the objection from *Christ's not appearing in public* after his resurrection: for, had there been any *imposture*, it had been easier of the two to have persuaded people at a distance, that he *had so appeared* to the *Jewish rulers*, or even to the *multitude*, and yet had been *rejected*, than that he had given his servants *such extraordinary powers*; since, had this assertion been false, every one might have been a witness to the falsehood of such a pretence, without the trouble and expence of a journey to Jerusalem, or any other distant place.

f *Gama-*

took counsel to slay them.

diately *consulted how they might put them* all *to death*, either under pretence of blasphemy, or for sedition and rebellion against the supreme council of the State. SECT. xi. Acts V. 33.

34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space,

But a certain celebrated *Pharisee* then *in the Sanhedrim, whose name was Gamaliel*[f], *a doctor of the law*, who trained up a great number of young students in the most exact knowledge of it, and was *in great esteem among all the people* on account of his learning, wisdom, and piety, *rose up; and* as he purposed to speak his mind with great freedom on a very tender point, he *commanded the apostles to be taken out for a little while.* 34

35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves, what ye intend to do, as touching these men.

And then addressing himself to his brethren, the other members of the court, *he said unto them, Ye men of Israel*, to whom divine Providence has committed the guardianship of this people, and the great care of their public affairs! I think it my duty, on this important occasion, seriously to advise you to *take heed to yourselves*, as to *what you are about to do to these men.* 35

36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be some body, to whom a

For you cannot but know, that several remarkable occurrences have lately happened, which have awakened a great degree of public expectation and regard; and it may not be improper to recollect some of them at this crisis. You particularly remember, that *some time ago* one *Theudas arose*[g], *pretending himself to be some extraor-* 36

[f] *Gamaliel.*] This was the *elder* of that name, a man of so great honour among them, that Onkelos, the author of the *Targum*, is said to have burnt *seventy pound weight* of perfumes at his funeral: Nay it is said, *the honour of the law failed with him.* If he were really, as he is reported to have been, *the author* of those *Prayers against Christians*, so long used in the *Jewish synagogues*, he must have lost that *moderation of temper* which he manifested here; perhaps exasperated at the growth of the *new sect*, and the testimony so boldly borne by the *apostles.* He was Paul's *master*; (Acts xxii. 3,) and no doubt he informed *that headstrong youth* (for such he then was,) of what now passed, and of many other things, which rendered his sin in *persecuting the Christians* so much the more aggravated. See *Wits. Meletem. cap.* 1, § 13, p. 12, 13; and Mr. Biscoe, at *Boyle's Lect. chap.* iii. § 9, p. 77, 78.

[g] *One Theudas arose.*] As the Theudas mentioned by Josephus, (*Antiq. lib.* xx. *cap.* 5, [al. 2.] § 1,) under the character of *a false prophet*, (who drew a great number of people after him, with a promise of dividing Jordan before them, but was defeated and *beheaded*, most of his followers being also slain and imprisoned,) appeared when Fadus was *procurator of Judea*, that is, according to Capellus seven, or according to Dr. Whitby at least ten years after this was spoken, there can be no reference to him here. I am therefore ready to conclude with Dr. Lightfoot and Basnage, (whose opinion Mr. Lardner has so learnedly defended) that among *the many leaders*, who, as Josephus assures us, (*Antiq. lib.* xvii. *cap.* 10, [al. 11,] § 4—8,) took up arms in defence of the public liberties, when the grand *enrolment* and *taxation* were made by Cyrenius in the days of Archelaus, (see *note* b on Luke ii. 2, Vol. VI. p. 62) there was one called *Theudas*, which (as Grotius observes,) was *a very common name* among the Jews.—He seems to have been supported by smaller numbers than the *second* of the name, and (as the *second* afterwards did,) *perished in the attempt*: but, as *his followers* were *dispersed*, and not slaughtered, like those of the *second Theudas*, survivors might talk much of him, and Gamaliel might have been particularly informed of his

SECT. xi.

Acts V. 36.

extraordinary person to whom a number of men, amounting to *about four hundred, adhered; who,* notwithstanding this, *was* himself quickly *slain* by the Roman forces, *and all who hearkened to him were scattered, and* after all the boasting promises of their leader, *came to nothing.*

37 *After him*[h] *Judas the Galilean arose*[i], *in the days of the* late *enrolment, and* endeavouring on the principles of sacred liberty to dissuade the Jews from owning the authority of the Romans in that instance, he *drew a multitude of people after him; and* the consequence was, that *he* also himself *was* quickly *destroyed, and all who had hark-*

38 *ened to him were dispersed*[k]. *And* therefore *with regard to the present affair I say unto you,* and give it as my most serious and deliberate advice now in the present crisis, *refrain from these men, and let them alone* to go on as they can, neither siding with them, nor violently opposing them; *for if this counsel* which they are taking, *or this work* which they have performed, *be of men,* if it be merely a human contrivance and deceit, which we are not capable of proving that it is, *it*

a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain, and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: For if this counsel, or this work be

his history, though Josephus only mentions it in general. Mr. Lardner, in his judicious remarks on this subject, has shewn, that there were *many persons* of the *same name,* whose histories greatly resembled each other. See *Lardner's Credib. of Gosp. Hist.* Part I. Book ii. chap. 7.

h *After him*] Eos has taken great pains in his *note* on this text, (*Exerc. Sacr.* p. 75—78,) to shew, that μετα τουτον may signify *besides him,* and even *before him* in this connection with προ τουτων των ημερων, which he would render *of late days.* (Compare Acts xxi. 38.) This he observes in favour of *his interpretation* of ver. 36, which he supposes to refer to the Theudas of Josephus, whose insurrection he thinks must have happened *before* this speech of Gamaliel.—But, as Beza and many others have abundantly proved, that this would quite *overturn the chronology* either of St. Luke or of Josephus, I conclude, that the very indeterminate expression προ τουτων ημερων in the *preceding verse* is most safely rendered *some time ago,* which, especially in an assembly of *aged men,* (as no doubt many of this *council* were,) might well be used in reference to an affair, which, though it happened *more than* 20 *years before,* must be fresh in most of their memories. (See *Mr. Lardner's Credibility,* Part I. Book ii. chap. 7.) And, as Judas might arise *after* Theudas, though the same *enrolment* might (as is supposed in the *preceding note,*) occasion the insurrection of both, I see no need of departing from the usual rendering of the *preposition* μετα in this construction, which every body knows is generally used to signify *after.*——To connect μετα τουτον with the *preceding verse,* (as some propose,) is quite unnatural in *grammar,* as well as disagreeable to *fact.*

i *Judas the Galilean arose.*] Josephus's account of this *Judas Gaulonites,* as he is generally called, may be seen in the *beginning* of the xviiith *Book* of his *Antiquities.*

k *All who had hearkened to him were dispersed.*] Mr. Lardner justly observes, this does not imply they were *destroyed,* and imagines, that though Gamaliel would not directly assert it, yet he insinuates, (agreeably to his principles, as *a Pharisee,*) that perhaps *Judas the Galilean,* as well as the *apostles,* might be actuated by some *divine impulse,* and that in one instance, as well as the other, the *doctrine* might *survive,* when the *teachers* were *taken off.* (See *Lardner's Credibility,* Part I. Book ii. chap. 1, § 3.) But the argument will be good on the *common interpretation;* and, as the word here used διασκορπισηναι, especially in this connection, most naturally implies *a calamitous* and *disappointing dispersion,* I apprehend, that, had it been intended in the sense my learned and much esteemed friend supposes, *the present tense* would rather have been used.

be of men, it will come to nought:

it will soon sink and come to nothing of itself; some incident will arise to discredit it, and the whole interest of this Jesus *will moulder away*, as that of Theudas and of Judas did, which seemed to be much more strongly supported by

SECT. XI.

Acts V. 38.

39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

human force. *But*, on the other hand, *if it* 39 *be* really the cause *of God*, which does not appear to me impossible, *you cannot* with all your power and policy *dissolve it*; but even though these particular instruments should be taken off, he will undoubtedly raise up others: And it will certainly become you in regard to your own safety to be particularly cautious, [*and take heed*] *lest you* not only lose the benefit of any deliverance which may be intended for Israel, but also *be* yourselves *found even fighters against* the power and providence of almighty *God*; an undertaking, which must prove infinitely fatal to all, who are so rash and unhappy as to attempt it.

40 And to him they agreed: And when they had called the apostles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

And, as the council were unable to elude the 40 force of what Gamaliel said, *they yielded to him*, acknowledging that his advice was safe and wise: *And having called in the apostles, and* ordered them to be *scourged* and beaten with rods in their presence, that in some measure they might vent their indignation, and might expose *them* to disgrace and shame, *they* strictly *charged them*, as they had done before, (chap. iv. 18) *not to speak* any more *in the name of Jesus*, if they would not incur yet severer punishment; *and*, having threatened them with what they must expect, if ever they were brought before them for the same crime again, they *dismissed them* for that time.

41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

Thus were the apostles sent away, *and*, far 41 from being terrified by all the cruel usage they had met with, or by the threatenings of their adversaries, *they departed from the presence of the Sanhedrim, rejoicing that they were* so honoured in the course of divine Providence, as to be *counted worthy* to suffer for Christ, and *to be exposed to infamy for the sake of his* venerable and sacred *name*, rightly judging, that a punishment of this kind, though generally shameful, became a glory to them; when borne in so excellent a cause, and for the sake of him, who, though so divinely great and so perfectly happy, had submitted not only to stripes, but to death for them. Instead therefore of obeying the order 42 of

42 And daily in the temple,

SECT. xi.

of the rulers, they grew so much the more courageous and diligent in spreading the gospel. *And every day*, from morning to night, *they ceased not* to pursue this great work; but took all opportunities to preach *in the temple*, though within sight of the Sanhedrim, and among many of its chief members, who, being obliged by their office often to resort thither, must frequently see and hear them; *and* at other times, between the seasons of public worship, they were engaged privately *from house to house*; and on the whole, one way or another, it was their constant business *to teach and to preach Jesus* as *the Messiah*, and to proclaim with unspeakable pleasure the good news of life and salvation given to sinners by him: The Sanhedrim, in the mean time, by the special providence of God, suffering them to go on, and affecting to overlook them as beneath their notice, though still with a secret rancour, which at length broke out into the extremest violence.

Acts V. 42. temple, and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 17, 18 WHICH shall we survey with the greater surprise, the *continued courage* of the *apostles*, or the *continued malice* of their *persecutors?* Again they *seize them*, again they *imprison them*; but how vainly do these *feeble worms*, amidst all the pride of dignity and power, oppose the counsels of *Omnipotence!*

19 *The angel of the Lord opens the door of their prison*, and leads forth his faithful servants to renewed liberty; An office which *this celestial Spirit* could not but perform *with delight*; as it was, no doubt, *with unutterable pleasure* that he gave them their errand, to *go* and *publish* with undaunted freedom and zeal *the words of this life*, of this *gospel* which *enlivens dead souls*, and points out the

20 road to an happy immortality. O that *the folly* of those who have heard it had never converted it into *a savour of death!*

21--26 Yet, behold, *the council* renewed the attack! The same *madness* which instigated the Jews to *seize Jesus*, when they had been *struck to the ground* by his miraculous power, (John xviii. 6.) animated these wretches to *contrive the destruction* of persons whom *God himself* had just before *rescued from their hands*; as they had formerly plotted *that of Lazarus*, (John xii. 10.) who had by a yet more astonishing wonder been *recalled from the grave*. To what fatal extravagancies will not *prejudice* hurry the mind? Against what convincing evidence will it not harden it?

29 *Ye shall*, says our Lord, *be brought before* councils *for my sake*; and

and it shall be *for a testimony against them.* (Matt. x. 18.) And such was *this repeated admonition* which these holy *prisoners* then *at the bar* gave to *the judges of Israel:* Still they urge the *divine authority* of their mission; still they proclaim *him* as *head* of the *church* and *world,* whom *these very men* had so lately *crucified* in so outrageous and contemptuous a manner. They point to *him,* whom these *priests* and *rulers* had *insulted on the cross,* as now *exalted at the right hand of God,* and urge them to seek *repentance* and *remission of sin,* from *him,* to whom they had *denied the common justice* due to the meanest of men, *the common humanity* due to the vilest of criminals in their dying moments, *giving him* in the thirst of his last agonies *vinegar mingled with gall.* (Mat. xxvii. 34.) SECT. xi. 30, 31

Thousands of *the people* had fallen under this charge; and *Jesus the Prince* had taken them under his protection. *Jesus the Saviour* had washed them in his blood. But by what is too frequently the *fatal prerogative* of greatness, *these princes of Israel* had hearts *too high* for the discipline of wisdom, and were *engaged against* these humble *ministers* of the Son of God; who nevertheless addressed them with *all the respect* which fidelity would allow, and could gladly have *poured forth their blood* for the salvation of those who *so cruelly thirsted* for it. They *gnashed* on these faithful ambassadors *with their teeth,* as if they would have devoured them alive; and justly will *gnashing of teeth* be the eternal portion of *those* who thus outrageously *rejected the counsel of God against themselves.* (Luke vii. 30.) 33

But God raised up *a guardian* for the *apostles,* where perhaps they least expected it; and the *prudence of Gamaliel* for a while *checked the fury* of his brethren: So does God sometimes use the *natural good sense* and *temper* of those who *do not* themselves *receive the gospel,* for the *protection* of those who are faithfully devoted to its service. Gamaliel had attentively *observed former events;* which is indeed the way to learn *the surest lessons of wisdom,* which are to be learnt any where but from the word of God. He had seen *some ruined* by their *seditious zeal;* and let those who *call themselves Christians* take heed; how they *rashly rise up* against legal authority, lest *taking the sword they perish by it.* (Mat. xxvi. 52.) Judiciously does he admonish *the council* to *take heed lest they be found fighters against God.* May divine grace ever guard us from *that fatal error* into which all who *oppose the gospel,* whatever they may imagine, assuredly fall! They *cannot* indeed *dissolve it,* but they *dash themselves in pieces* against it. *Be wise therefore O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth!* (Psal. ii. 10.) 34 35--37 39

For reasons of State, *the apostles* were to be *scourged,* though *their judges* were *inwardly convinced* that it was at least possible *their message* might be *divine.* Deliver us, *O Lord,* from *that policy* which shall lead us to imagine *any evil so great* as that 40

SECT. XI. which may offend thee! *The punishment* which these excellent men suffered was *infamous*, but *the cause* in which they endured it rendered it *glorious*; nor could *those stripes* be half so *painful* to their flesh, as *an opportunity* of thus *approving their fidelity* to their Lord was *delightful* to their pious souls: Well might they *triumph* in *bearing the scourge* for him who *bore the cross*, and *died on it* for them. Let us *arm ourselves with the same mind*, if in a severer sense than this *we should be called* for his sake *to resist unto blood.*

SECT. XII.

The choice of the seven deacons. *Stephen preaches Christ, and after disputing with some of the Jewish societies, is brought before the Sanhedrim.* Acts VI. 1—12.

ACTS VI. 1.

SECT. XII. *NOW in those days* of which we have been speaking, and some time after the fact last recorded had fallen out, *the number of the disciples being multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the* Hellenists or *Grecians*, that is, of those converts to the gospel who being foreign Jews and coming from the western countries, used the Greek language in their synagogues and in their conversation [a], *against the Hebrews*, who were natives of Judea, and used the Hebrew or the Syriac tongue; *because*, as they were strangers at Jerusalem, and had not so much interest as the natives, some of *their* necessitous *widows were* in some degree at least *neglected* [b], *in the daily*

Acts VI. 1.

ACTS VI. 1.

AND in those days when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

a *Grecians*, that is,——foreign Jews, &c.] This, for reasons which may be seen at large in Dr. Benson's *History*, appears to me by far *the most probable* of the *seven opinions* mentioned by Fabricius, (in his *Biblioth. Græc.* lib. iv. cap. 5. note q. Vol. III. p. 226.) as well as that which is *generally allowed* by all the best *commentators*. (See *Critic. Magn. in loc.*) That of Mons. Fourmont, (*Hist. Acad. Roy.* Vol. III. p. 105.) that they were Syrians, depends on uncertain and improbable conjectures, either that the Acts were written in Syriac, or ελληνιςας read for ελληνας, persons belonging to Helena Queen of the Adiabeni. (See *Wolf. in loc.*) As there were so many Jews who used the Greek *translation* of the Bible, who might therefore very properly be denoted by this word, it is extremely probable, *their united interest* should be in question on such an occasion, and not merely that of *those* who came from Syria.—Beza interprets the word, as denoting only *circumcised proselytes*; but I think, without any reason. See *Drus. in loc.*

b *Their widows were neglected.*] The *apostles* undoubtedly acted a very faithful part in the *distribution of money* raised by the *sale of lands*: (See *note* c on chap iv. 37. § 10. p. 549.) But as Lord Barrington well observes, (*Miscell. Sacr. Abstract*, p. 11. they *could not do all things*. Perhaps they intrusted some who had been *proprietors of the estates sold*, who would naturally have some peculiar regard to the necessity of *their neighbours*, as being best acquainted with *them*; and, if any *suspicions* arose as to the sincerity of their character, and the reasonableness of

their

SECT. XII.

Acts VI. 1.

daily ministration of the charities that were distributed to the poor members of the church. And as the apostles were concerned, though not alone, in that distribution, the money raised as above by the sale of estates having been brought to them,) they were solicitous to obviate all those reflections which might fall upon them on this occasion, as they might otherwise in some measure have affected their usefulness.

2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

2 *And the twelve* apostles *having called the multitude of the disciples together* [c], communicated the matter to them, and *said, It is by no means* proper or *agreeable, that we*, who have an office to discharge of so much greater weight and consequence, *should leave* the important care of dispensing *the word of God, to attend* the *tables* of the poor, and see who are served there; and yet this we must do, in order to prevent these complaints, unless some further measures be taken by common consent. *Therefore, brethren*, as you easily see how inconvenient it would be to suffer this care to lie upon us, and how inevitably it would render us incapable of attending to the proper duties of our office, it is our united request to you, that you *look out from among yourselves seven men* [d] *of an attested character full of the Holy Spirit, and of* approved *wisdom, whom we may* by common consent and approbation *set over this affair* [e], and who may make it their particular business to

3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

3

their pretensions, *these strangers* would *(ceteris paribus)* be least capable of giving satisaction.

c *Having called the multitude of the disciples together.*] Dr. Whitby has solidly proved on this head, that by these we are to understand, not (as Dr. Lightfoot imagined,) the rest of the *hundred and twenty*, but the *whole body of Christian converts*, they being the persons to whom satisfaction was then due.

d *Seven men.*] Mr. Mede thinks this an allusion to the *seven archangels*, whom he supposes the great *courtiers of heaven*; and many *other texts*, produced in support of that *rabbinical opinion*, seem almost as little to the purpose as this.

e *Whom we may set over this affair.*] I apprehend, the *apostles* speak here of what was to be *the joint act* of themselves and the *whole church*, as to be sure, after *they* had exercised *the trust* for a while, it would have been *most indecent* to have devolved it on any, but such as *they* should have approved.—It is *a maxim* with me in this work, to meddle as little as possible with *controversies* about *church order* and *government*, or any other *circumstantial points* that have unhappily divided the *Protestant* world. Yet I hope I shall give no offence by observing, that no just argument can be drawn from the *actions of the apostles*, with their extraordinary powers and credentials to the rights of *succeeding ministers* destitute of such powers and credentials. It would however have been happy for the *church* in every age, had its *ordinary ministers* taken the same care to act *in concert with the people* committed to their charge, and to pay all due deference to their *natural rights*, which the *apostles* themselves, extraordinary as their commission and office was, did on this and other occasions. The *therec grand canons*, that all things should be done *decently, in charity*, and *to edification*, duly attended to, would supersede the necessity of *ten thousand* which have been *made since*, and perhaps, if rightly weighed, would be found absolutely to *vacate* a great part of them.

Stephen,

SECT. xii.

to attend to the management of it. *And we,* in the mean time, being freed from this great incumbrance, *will constantly attend to prayer,* Acts VI. 4. *and to the ministry of the word,* which is our grand business, and which we could be glad to prosecute without interruption.

4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

5 *And the speech* the apostles made *was pleasing to all the multitude,* who were called together upon this occasion; *and* having deliberated a little upon the choice that was to be made, *they elected* seven, to be set apart to the office of deacons, whose names were as follows, There was *Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit* [f], of whose heroic character and glorious end we shall presently have occasion to speak; *and Philip,* who long continued an ornament and blessing to the church, being at length raised to a yet higher character: *and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas,* who was not a Jew born, but *a proselyte of Antioch* [g], whom they were the more willing to fix in this office, as his peculiar relation to the Grecians would make him especially careful to remedy any neglect of them, which might insensibly have prevailed.

5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch.

6 These were the persons in *whom* they chose to repose this confidence; and accordingly *they presented* them *before the apostles: And they, having prayed* that a divine blessing might attend all their ministrations and care, *laid* [*their*] *hands upon them,* that so they might not only express their solemn designation to the office, but might confer upon them such extraordinary gifts as would qualify them yet more abundantly for the full discharge of it.

6 Whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands on them.

7 *And* the consequence was, that the matter of complaint being thus removed, and the apostles more

7 And the word of God increased; and the number

[f] *Stephen, a man full of faith,* &c.] Mr. Fleming (in his *Christology,* Vol. II. p. 166.) endeavours to prove, that Stephen was one of the *seventy,* but it seems quite a precarious conjecture. The *termination* of most of these *names* makes it probable they were Hellenists; a supposition which also agrees very well with the occasion of their election.

[g] *Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch.*] Some ancient writers tell us, that he fell into error in the decline of life, and became *the founder* of the sect of *the Nicolaitans,* mentioned Rev. ii. 6, 15. (See *Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib.* iii. *cap.* 29. and *Iren. lib.* i. *cap.* 26.) But it seems much more probable, that the *founder of this sect,* considering how common the name was, might be *some other person* so called, or else (as Mr. L'Enfant conjectures, that some of *his words* or *actions* being *misinterpreted* might be the occasion of *seduction,* under the authority of so venerable a name as his.—— We may observe by the way, that it is evident the word *proselyte* here signifies, one who by circumcision had entered himself into the body of the Jewish people; for none imagine Nicolas, to have been what is commonly called *a proselyte of the gate,* no *uncircumcised person* being yet admitted into the *Christian church.*

number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

more entirely at leisure to attend to the great and peculiar duties of their office, *the word of God grew, and the number of disciples in* and about *Jerusalem was greatly multiplied; and* in particular, what might seem very surprising, *a great multitude of priests became obedient to the faith*[h] notwithstanding all those prejudices, which they had imbibed against this new doctrine, from the scorn with which the great and the noble generally treated it, and the loss of those temporal advantages which they might be called to resign out of regard to it.

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

8 *And Stephen*, having for some time discharged the office of a deacon with great honour and fidelity, was raised by divine Providence and Grace to the superior honours of an evangelist and a martyr[i], and was enabled, in a very extraordinary manner, to confirm the doctrine he taught; for, *being full of grace and of power*[k], and eminently qualified for the performance of wonderful things, he *wrought* many extraordinary *miracles and great signs among the people.*

9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and Cyrenians,

9 *But*, notwithstanding all the miracles that were done by him, *there arose some of the synagogue which is called* [*that*] *of the Libertines*, as having been the children of freed men, that is, of

h *A great multitude of priests*, &c.] We learn from Ezra, chap. iii. 36—39, that four thousand two hundred and eighty-nine *priests* returned from the *captivity*; the number of which was now probably much increased.——I see no foundation in the authority of any *ancient copies*, for reading with Casaubon, και των ιερεων, and explaining it as if it were και τινες των ιερεων, *and some of the priests*. It is indeed wonderful, that *a great multitude of them* should embrace *the gospel*, considering what peculiar *resentments* they must expect from their *unbelieving brethren*, and the great *losses* to which they must be exposed in consequence of being *cast out of their office*; (as it is not to be imagined, that, when *Christians* were *cast out of the synagogues*, they would be retained as *temple-ministers*:) But the grace of God was able to animate and support them against all. And it is very probable the miracle of *rending the veil of the temple*, and the testimony of *the guards* to the truth of *the resurrection*, (which some of the chief of *that order* heard, and might perhaps be whispered to some others,) might contribute considerably toward *their conversion*, in concurrence with the *miraculous gifts* and *powers* of the *apostles*, the most convincing proofs of which they saw before their eyes in their own *temple*. —Some would render πολυς οχλος, *a numerous body*, as if it intimated, that, after mutual conferences with each other, they agreed to *come over in a body*; which might be the case: but, as the *original* does not determine that positively, I have kept to what seemed *a more literal version*: For which reason also I cannot, with Heinsius, render οχλος ιερεων, *many priests of the lower rank*.

i The superior honours of an evangelist, &c.] It plainly appears from the *foregoing history* of the *institution of the office* that it was not as *a deacon* that he *preached*; but the *extraordinary gifts of the Spirit* he received, eminently qualified him for that work: And no doubt, *many Christians*, not statedly devoted to *the ministry*, and whose *furniture* was far inferior to his, would be capable of declaring Christ and *his gospel* to strangers in an edifying and useful manner, and would not fail accordingly to do it, as Providence gave them a call and opportunity.

k *Full of grace and of power.*] So many valuable *copies* read χαριτος, instead of πιστεως, that I thought myself obliged to follow them. See *Dr. Mill in loc.*

l *Libertines*,

SECT. XII.

Acts IV. 9.

of emancipated captives or slaves[l], *and* [*some*] *of the Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them* who were natives *of Cilicia and Asia*, who endeavoured to prevent the success of his preaching, by *disputing with Stephen*[m], and arguing

nians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia, and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

10 with him concerning his doctrine. *And* though they had an high opinion of their own sufficiency to manage the dispute, yet such was the force of his reasoning, that *they were not able to stand against the wisdom and Spirit with which he spake*, the divine Spirit itself guiding his thoughts and animating his expressions, which raised him far above the strength of his natural genius, and made him indeed a wonder to all that heard him. (Compare Mat. x. 20. and Luke xxi. 15.)

10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake.

11 *Then*, as they found they were incapable of defending themselves by fair argument, they had recourse to a most mean and dishonest fraud; for *they suborned men to* depose and *say, We heard him*, even this very Stephen, *speak blasphemous words against Moses, and* [*against*] *God* himself[n], the great author of that religion which Moses taught us by command from him.

11 Then they suborned men which said, we have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and *against* God.

12 *And* as the law required that a blasphemer should be stoned, (Lev. xxiv. 16.) *they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes*, especially those who were in stations of authority, against him; *and setting upon* [*him,*] *they* violently seized and *dragged him away with them, and brought* [*him*] *to the Sanhedrim* which

12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon *him*, and caught him, and brought *him* to the council.

l *Libertines*, as having been the children of freed-men, &c.] Grotius, Salmatius, Basnage, Vitringa, and many other illustrious writers generally agree in the interpretation given in the *paraphrase*; for the illustration of which most of them remind us, that great numbers of Jews, taken captive by Pompey, and carried into Italy, were (as Philo tells us, *Oper.* p. 1014) set at liberty, and obtained *their freedom* from their masters. *Their children* therefore would be *libertini* in the proper sense of that word: agreeably to this, the Jews banished from Rome by Tiberius, (who are mentioned both by Josephus, *Antiq. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 3. [al. 5.] § 5; and Suetonius, *Tiber. cap.* 36.) are spoken of by Tacitus, *Annal. lib.* ii. *cap.* 85, as of *the libertine race*, who might easily constitute one of the 480 *synagogues* said to have been at Jerusalem. (See Mr. *Lardner's Credibility*, Part I. Book i. chap. 3. § 4.) —When so natural a solution offers, it is hardly worth while to inquire after *Altingius's Nethinim*, or *Cademan's* לעכדתין, *i. e.* persons speaking Hebrew, or the *libertines*, whom Maius (agreeably indeed to the Syriac,) supposes to have *built this synagogue*. But the curious reader may, if he pleases, see a farther account of their opinions, and that of some others, in *Wolfius' notes* on this verse.—Dr. Hammond and Mr. Biscoe (chap. iv. § 4, p. 103.) take them to have been *such* Jews as were *free citizens* of Rome: but I do not remember to have seen the word *libertini* used in that sense.

m *Disputing with Stephen.*] As the most considerable *synagogues* in Jerusalem had each a kind of *academy* or *college of young students* belonging to it, instructed under some celebrated *rabbi*, it is no wonder such nurseries should afford *disputants*, like these spoken of here.

n *Blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.*] See *note* a on chap. vi. in the beginning of the *next section*.

which was then sitting; and there, in presence of their highest court of judicature, they prosecuted the affair to an issue, which will be described in the following sections. SECT. XII. Acts VI. 12.

IMPROVEMENT.

WE see how difficult it is, even for the wisest and best of men, to manage *a great multitude of affairs*, without *inconvenience* and without *reflection:* It will therefore be our prudence not to ingross *too much business* into our own hands, but to be willing to *divide it* with *our brethren*, with *our inferiors*, allotting to each *their proper province*, that the whole may proceed with harmony and order. Ver. 1, 4

Let us be solicitous that nothing may be done *through partiality;* especially let those avoid it who are *intrusted* with the *distribution of charities;* It is a solemn *trust*, for which *their characters at least* are to answer to the world now, and *they themselves* must ere long account for it to God. Let them therefore be willing to be *informed of the truth* of particular cases, willing to *compare* a variety of them, and then *select such* as in their consciences they are persuaded it is the will of God they should in present circumstances *regard*, and in such or such a proportion *prefer* to the rest. 1

In *religious societies* it may be highly proper, that after the example here given in the apostolic age, *deacons*, or persons to perform this office, *should be elected* by the *society*, in concurrence with their *ministers*. It is *their business to serve tables*. Happy *those societies* who make choice of *men of an attested character*, and of *those* who appear by the virtues and graces of the *Christian temper* to be in that sense *full of the Holy Spirit!* 3

While these good men are dealing forth their *liberal contributions*, (by which, while *Christ* has any *poor members* remaining we are still to testify *our love to him,*) let ministers devote themselves with all attention *to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.* Let those, who would *administer the word* with comfort and success, remember of how great importance it is, that it be *watered with prayer*, falling upon it *as the former* and *as the latter rain;* and especially see to it, that, by the constant exercise of *lively devotion* in secret, in their families, and on other proper social occasions, they keep *their graces* vigorous and active; that, living continually in such a state of *nearness to God*, they may be qualified to *speak in his name* with that dignity, tenderness, and authority, which nothing but *true* and *elevated devotion* can naturally express, or can long retain. 4

Let

SECT. XII.

Let us adore that efficacy of *divine grace*, whereby *a multitude of the* Jewish *priests were made obedient to the faith*; and let us heartily pray, that, if there are any who claim *a sacred character*, and yet, out of regard to worldly honour or interest, *oppose* the power and purity of the gospel, they may be *convinced* by the influence of the *blessed Spirit*, that they can have *no interest* in contradiction to the truth, and that they are happy *in purchasing*, at the highest price, *that gospel* which may enrich them for ever.

Ver. 7

9 In whatsoever *station* we are fixed, whether in the *world* or the *church*, let us always remember our obligation to *plead the cause of the gospel*, and to *render a reason for the hope that is in us*. If this engage us in *disputation* with *men of corrupt minds*, we must still *hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering*, knowing that *he is faithful that has promised*. (Heb. x. 23.)

11 The *vilest charge* may, as in this instance, be fixed upon the most worthy men; *piety* may be defamed as *blasphemy*, and that which is the *true love of our country* as *treason against it*: But there is *one supreme Lawgiver and Judge*, who will not fail, sooner or later, to *plead the cause of injured innocence*. And when we read of this *vile attack* that was made by *perjury* on the *character* and *life* of Stephen, we may take occasion to adore that *wise and powerful providence* which so remarkably exerts itself to *defend our reputation* and *our lives* from those *false* and *venomous tongues* which, were it not for that secret invisible restraint, might, *like a two-edged sword*, so quickly destroy both.

SECT. XIII.

Stephen, being accused before the Sanhedrim of blasphemy, begins his vindication of himself from that charge. Acts VI. 13, *to the end.* VII. 1—14.

Acts VI. 13.

SECT. XIII.

IT was observed in the last section, that those Jews who had been confounded by the force and spirit of Stephen's argument and address, had brought him before the Sanhedrim; *and* while he stood before them as a prisoner, *they set up* certain *false witnesses, who said, This* detestable *man is incessantly speaking blasphemous words against this holy place* in which we now are, that is, against Jerusalem and the temple, *and* likewise against *the* divinely inspired *law*, as one that has no reverence at all for its authority.

Acts VI. 13.

Acts VI. 13.

AND set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law.

14 *For we* ourselves *have heard him saying, that this* same *Jesus of Nazareth*, whom he celebrates so much upon every occasion as the long expected and

14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall

shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

and desired Messiah, having been rejected and crucified by your authority, in concurrence with that of the whole Jewish people, *shall* nevertheless *destroy this* city, and this holy *place*; *and*, in consequence of that, *shall* entirely *change the* rites and *customs which Moses delivered to us*[a], and put an end to the whole authority of his law.

SECT. xiii.

Acts VI. 14.

15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

And, at the very instant that this heinous charge was advanced against Stephen, *all that were sitting in the Sanhedrim* as his judges, *fixing their eyes upon him*, *saw* a surprising radiancy upon *his countenance*, so that it appeared *like the countenance of an angel*[b]; God being pleased to crown the natural benignity, sweetness, and composure of his aspect, with a refulgent lustre, like what those celestial spirits have sometimes worn, when they have appeared as his messengers to men.

15

Acts VII. 1. Then said the high-priest, Are these things so?

Nevertheless the council proceeded against him, *and the high-priest*, without any particular notice of it, *said* with an affected calmness, as to a common criminal on his trial, *Are these things indeed thus*, as these witnesses have deposed? Thou art permitted to make thy defence, and this is thy time to speak; if therefore thou hast any thing to offer in thine own vindication from this charge of blasphemy, which the witnesses have so expressly advanced against thee, plead it; and the court will patiently attend to what thou hast to say, before it proceeds to sentence.

Acts VII. 1

And

a *Shall change the customs which Moses delivered to us.*] I see no reason to believe that Stephen knew the mystery of the *abolition* of the Mosaic *law*, which the *apostles* do not seem immediately to have understood; and it is much less probable, that *he openly taught* what Paul himself many years after *insinuated* with so much *caution*. (Compare Gal. ii. 2.) This therefore seems to have been *the inference they drew* from what he taught, of the *destruction* he denounced on the Jews, if they continued in their unbelief. But it was *a very precarious inference*, as *the city* and *temple* had been *destroyed before*, without any *repeal of the law*, and therefore they were *false witnesses*.

b *Like the countenance of an angel.*] Grotius, Brennius, L'Enfant, and some others interpret this as *a proverbial expression* of the majesty and beauty of his countenance, arising from a transport of inward joy, in the consciousness of innocence and expectation of glory, though he had so cruel a sentence and execution in view: (Compare Gen. xxxiii. 10. 1 Sam. xxix. 9. Eccles. viii. 1. and Esth. [*Apoc.*] xv. 13.) And upon this the *translation* of 1727 takes the strange liberty of rendering it, *They saw an air of majesty in his aspect*. But with Dr. Hammond and Benson, I rather think, there was *a supernatural splendor*, as on the countenance of Moses, Exod. xxxiv. 29.—It was indeed a most astonishing instance of the incorrigible hardness and wickedness of their hearts, that they could *murder a man*, on whom God put such a *visible glory*, similar to that of their great *legislator*: but, perhaps, they might ascribe it to *magic*; and we know how little they made of *other miracles*, the truth of which they were compelled to acknowledge. Compare Acts iv. 16.

SECT. XIII.

Acts VII. 2.

And upon this Stephen began a large discourse[c], in which, in the softest and most inoffensive manner, he solemnly declared his firm persuasion of the divine authority of that law, which he was charged with blaspheming; and proved to them from their own scriptures, that God's gracious regards to his people were not limited within the boundaries of that land, nor appropriated to those who were subjected to the Mosaic ritual; at the same time reminding them of some instances, in which they had ungratefully rejected those whom God had appointed for their deliverers, that they might be cautioned against repeating the fault in this instance to their final ruin. *He* therefore traced the matter to its original, and *said, Men, brethren, and fathers*, I beseech you all, whether old or young, whether of greater or lower rank, to *hearken* to me, while I offer these things, which may not only serve for my own vindication from this unjust charge, but may likewise remind you of some important particulars, which it is your highest interest in present circumstances seriously to consider. It is well known to all of you, that long before our law was given, or the place in which we stand had any peculiar sanctity, *the God of glory appeared to our father Abraham*, by some resplendent and majestic symbol of his presence, *while he was* yet with his idolatrous ancestors *in Mesopotamia*, (Gen xi. 31) *before he dwelt in Charran*, which for a while he did, after he had removed his abode from Ur of the Chaldeans, which was the land of his nativity. In this idolatrous land it was, that God appeared *and said to him, Depart from* this *thy* native *country, and from thy kindred*, who are now alienated from my worship, *and come* away from this land, which for so long a time has

2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into

[c] Stephen began a large discourse.] Le Clerk with a mixture of rashness and weakness, into which he frequently falls in his *Reflections on Scripture*, not understanding *the true scope* of this excellent discourse, presumes to *censure it*, as containing many things *not to the purpose*, as well as many *slips of memory*, though it is expressly said, (ver. 55) that *Stephen* was *full of the Holy Spirit*, when he delivered it. I am persuaded, that it will be *admired* by all that well understand it, and hope *the hints* I have given in the *paraphrase* will lead the reader into the *true design* of it, and shew the *propriety* of the circumstances introduced. Dr. Benson has illustrated it in a large and very judicious manner, in his *History*, Vol. I. p. 123—135, which I shall leave the curious reader to consult. I only add, that, had not Stephen been *interrupted* by their fury, it is probable, he would have *added some other articles*, and have *summed up the discourse* in such a manner, as to shew, that the *main design of it* was to humble that *haughtiness of spirit*, which occasioned their rejecting Jesus and his *gospel*.

into the land which I shall shew thee.

has been the seat of thy family, *into a* pleasant and excellent *land which I will shew thee*, and to which, by my extraordinary interposition, I will guide thee; though thou at present dost not know either its situation or its product. SECT. xiii. Acts VII. 3.

4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his Father was dead, he removed him into this land wherein ye now dwell.

4 *Then* Abraham, strange as this command might seem, with all submission readily obeyed it; and *departing from* Ur in *the land of the Chaldeans, he dwelt* for several years *in Charran*, having been led by divine conduct thither, and not immediately receiving a signal to proceed any farther: But, by another call from God, he was directed to depart from Charran, *and* accordingly *from thence, after his father died*[d], *he*, (that is, God,) by the singular interposition of his providence, *caused him to remove his habitation into this land in which you now dwell.*

5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no not *so much as* to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when *as yet* he had no child.

5 *And* yet upon his coming into Canaan, *he gave him no* present *inheritance in it, not so much as the dimensions of his foot*, or a piece of land which he might cover with the sole of it; for the little portion of it that he could call his own, he held by purchase, and not as by any claim of divine donation: *Nevertheless he promised to give it for a* lasting *possession to him, even to his seed after him*[e], *when* [*as yet*] by the way, *he had*

d *After his father died.*] Many passages in Stephen's *speech* have been objected to, as contradictory to the account given of the *same facts* in the *Old Testament*. I can by no means acquiesce in the answer which some have given, that Luke's *inspiration*, only secured to us an exact account of *what* Stephen *said*: for it seems very unreasonable to suppose, that on so extraordinary an occasion *the Spirit* so expressly *promised* in such circumstances, (even to the *seventy* as well as to the *apostles*,) should leave him to frequent and palpable *slips of memory*, into which it is not probable any intelligent *Christian minister* would now fall in a like circumstance. It seems therefore much more honourable to *Christianity* to suppose, that, if there are any passages here which *cannot be reconciled* with the passages of the *Old Testament* to which they refer, (which most that have been objected to certainly may,) it is owing to some *error of transcribers*, from which, as it is plain from *various readings*, even the *copies* of the *sacred books* have not always been secure, as without *a continued miracle* it it impossible they should.—But as for what is here urged, as if it were *inconsistent* with Gen. xi. 26, 32. xii. 4. from whence it is argued, that, as Terah was but 70 years old when Abraham was born, and Abraham but 75 when he departed from Haran, these make no more than 145 years; but Terah lived to be 205, and so must have lived 60 years after Abraham left Haran, whereas Stephen affirms, that Abraham went not from thence till *after his father died*: In answer to this, it is well observed by Mr. Biscoe, (chap. xviii. p. 595—600,) that this objection is built upon an unproved supposition, that Abraham was Terah's *eldest son*, or that he was *born in his 70th year*; not to insist on the solution which is offered to this difficulty by Le Clerc, Knatchbull, Cappellus, and others, that, according to the *Samaritan* copy, Terah lived but 145 years.—Cladenius's solution, built on the distinction between κατοικειν, *sojourning*, and μετοικειν, *fixing his abode there* by the purchase of *a sepulchre*, seems too mean a subterfuge to be particularly discussed.

e *Even to his seed.*] The particle και so often signifies *even*, that I think it much more natural to render it thus, and to consider this clause as *explaining the former*, in order to avoid that express contradiction, which seems to arise from translating it as we do.

SECT. XIII.

had no child, and humanly speaking it was not likely he ever should have one: but the faith of our pious ancestor triumphed over all these seeming difficulties, and joyfully embraced the divine revelation and promise.

Acts VII. 5.

6 *And* when God had brought Abraham into this country, he did not keep him and his posterity here till the time they were to enter upon the possession of it, in consequence of this divine grant, but, on the contrary, *God spake* [*to him*] *thus* in a vision, (Gen. xv. 13, 14.) "*that his seed should sojourn* and be strangers *in a foreign land, and they* among whom they sojourn *shall enslave and abuse them;* and these events, with the circumstances preparatory to them, shall extend themselves to the full period of *four* 7 *hundred years*[f]. *And the nation to which they shall be enslaved, said God* in the same oracle, *I will* assuredly *judge*, and punish with a righteous and tremendous severity: *And afterwards they shall come out* of that land, *and serve me in this place;* inhabiting this land in which thou now dwellest, and erecting a temple for the per- 8 formance of my worship here." This was God's promise to him while he was yet uncircumcised, *and* in confirmation of it *he gave him*, as you well know, *the covenant of circumcision*, a sacred rite, which far from blaspheming, I revere as the solemn seal of this contract between God and Abraham: *And so* being circumcised himself, as soon as God required it, (Gen. xvii. 23, 24.) *he* quickly after *begat Isaac, and circumcised him* also *on the eighth day*, according to the divine appointment; *and Isaac* [*begat*] *Jacob, and Jacob* [*begat*] *the twelve patriarchs*, who were the respective heads of our twelve tribes of Israel.

6 And God spake on this wise, that his seed should sojourn in a strange land, and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat *them* evil four hundred years.

7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage, will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.

8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so *Abraham* begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day: and Isaac *begat* Jacob, and Jacob *begat* the twelve patriarchs.

And

[f] *Four hundred years.*] Many good *critics* suppose, that this is mentioned here, as well as in the text from which it is quoted, (Gen. xv. 13.) as *a round sum*, without taking notice of the *broken number*, the exact time being *four hundred and thirty years*, as Moses determines it, Exod. xii. 40. with whom the apostle Paul agrees, Gal. iii. 17. For Abraham was 75 years old, when he came into Canaan, (Gen. xii. 4.) which being considered as the beginning of the period, from thence to the birth of Isaac was 25 years; and Isaac was sixty years old when he begat Jacob, who went to Egypt at 130; which numbers added together make 215 years; and from thence to the time of Israel's departure from Egypt was 215 years more. (See *Joseph. Antiq. lib.* ii. *cap.* 15, [al. 6.] § 2.)— But Moses, in the text quoted from Exodus, refers to the *whole period* of the sojourning of Abraham and his family in Canaan and Egypt, as strangers in those lands; whereas *this promise* being made but a little before Isaac's *birth*, and the prediction taking place from that event, must include only 405 years, which might *in a round sum* be yet more easily and properly called *four hundred*. See *Bp. Patrick* on Gen. xv. 13. and *Dr. Whitby in loc.*

Acts VII. 9.

9 And the patriarchs moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him.

And in those days the providence of God began to work for the accomplishment of that surprising prediction, which I mentioned but now: For the rest of *the patriarchs*, though their relation to such holy ancestors might have taught them a much better lesson, *being moved with envy*[g] at the superior regard which Jacob shewed to his favourite son, most inhumanly *sold Joseph* their brother *into Egypt*, where he became a slave, and went through a great variety of calamities: *Nevertheless God was with him* there, though no longer in the promised land, and made that country a scene of very glorious providence towards him.

10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt: and he made him governor over Egypt, and all his house.

And he there *delivered him out of all his afflictions*, which his integrity and piety had brought upon him, *and gave him favour and* high veneration, on account of that distinguished *wisdom* which appeared to be in him, *in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he constituted him ruler over* the land of *Egypt*, *and* in particular over *all his* royal *house*, committing all things in the palace as well as elsewhere, to his direction and management, even to the management of this despised Joseph, whom his brethren (then the whole house of Israel) had most outrageously insulted and abused, and even sold for a slave.

11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction; and our fathers found no sustenance.

And according to the predictions of Joseph, which had awakened so great an attention, when seven years of plenty were past, *a famine came upon all the land of Egypt*, *and* extended itself over *Canaan* too; *and* this calamity reduced them to such *great affliction* and distress, that they knew not how to subsist, *and* even in this fruitful land *our fathers did not find* sufficient *sustenance* to support themselves and their families.

12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.

But Jacob hearing that there was corn in Egypt, ordered his sons to go and fetch them a supply from thence, and *sent our fathers*, the ten patriarchs thither *first*, keeping Benjamin with him at home.

13 And at the second

And the second time that they

[g] *Being moved with envy.*] From what Stephen mentions of the story of Joseph, it was obvious to infer, (as many good writers have observed,) that the greatest *favourites of heaven* might *suffer by the envy* of those who were called *the Israel of God*, and might be *exalted by him* after having been *rejected by them:* A thought worthy of their consideration with respect to Jesus; but it would not have been proper directly to insert *such a reference* in the *paraphrase*, as prudence would not allow Stephen in the beginning of this finely adjusted defence, to say *expressly* what they could not have *borne to hear*, as appears by the manner in which they resented *his application of these premises* when he was drawing towards a conclusion.

[h] *Amounting*

SECT. xiii.

they went, when sorely against his good father's will Benjamin accompanied them, *Joseph was made known to his brethren; and* as the matter was immediately made public, *the family* and descent *of Joseph was discovered to Pharaoh,* of which he had not been particularly informed before.

Acts VII. 13.

cond *time* Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.

14 *And* upon this, with the full consent of that generous prince, *Joseph sent and invited his* aged *father Jacob, and all his kindred to him* into Egypt; who accordingly went down thither in a company, *amounting* in the whole, together with their wives, *to seventy-five souls*[h], without reckoning Jacob himself, and Joseph's family already there. And thus their sojourning in that land began, during which they were still under the care of divine Providence, till the time of their return to Canaan approached, of which I shall presently speak.

14 Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.

IMPROVEMENT.

Acts vi. 13 14

THUS loud may the clamour of *malice* and *falsehood* rise against *innocence* and *truth.* Incessant *blasphemy* is charged on one of the most pious of men; and we wonder at it the less, since it was charged upon Jesus himself; and, *if they called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household?* (Mat. x. 25.) His disciple learns of him *not to render evil for evil,* but answers

Acts vii. 2

h *Amounting to seventy-five souls.*] Of the various solutions which learned men have given of the *seeming inconsistency* between this account, and that given by Moses, (Gen. xlvi. 27. Exod. i. 5. and Deut. x. 22.) which makes them but *seventy,* (with which also Josephus agrees, *Antiq. lib.* ii. *cap.* 7, [al. 4,] § 4,) the most probable seems to be this. Moses expressly leaves out *all the wives,* (Gen. xlvi. 26,) whom he had said before *the sons of Israel carried with them,* (ver. 5.) and only speaks of those *that came out of Jacob's loins,* inserting in the catalogue that he gives of his children, *two grand-children* of Judah, (to supply the place of Er and Onan, who had *died in Canaan*) Hezron and Hamul, though it is probable they were *not born* till after Jacob's arrival in Egypt; and, having first computed them at *sixty six,* he then adds Joseph and his *two sons* that were before in Egypt, and, reckoning Jacob with them, makes the whole number to amount to *seventy.* But Stephen speaks of all *that went down with him,* and so excludes Jacob himself, and the *two* afterwards born, and Joseph and his children, which reduces the number thus: The *eleven brethren* with Dinah their sister, and *fifty-two* that had descended from them, amount to *sixty-four;* to which adding *eleven wives,* (some of the *patriarchs* having probably buried theirs, and but few of their children being yet married,) they amount in all to *seventy-five.* See *Pool's Synopsis,* and *Whitby in loc.* and *Biscoe,* at *Boyle's Lec.* chap. xviii. p. 602—606.——Could the reading of πανλις or πανλως instead of πντε, (which Beza mentions as a conjecture,) be supported by proper authorities, so that it might be rendered *all amounting to seventy souls,* it would make the whole matter quite easy. Grotius also supposes, that the *original reading* here was *seventy,* and that the *Septuagint* copy was *altered* to its present form, to suit with the *mistaken reading* of *seventy-five;* for, in the two first *texts* referred to in the beginning of *this note,* the *Septuagint* read *seventy-five,* while in Deut. x. 22 they agree with the Hebrew, and read *seventy,* which is somewhat strange.

swers in the language of *calm reason*, and of meek though powerful *conviction*. SECT. XIII.

While Stephen leads back our contemplation to so many *remarkable facts* of the Old Testament, let us reflect upon them with those *devout affections* which become *the Israel of God*. Let us adore *the God of glory* that *appeared to Abraham*, and called him forth to be so bright an example of faith and piety, in *leaving his country and kindred*, to follow the leadings of providence, when he *knew not* in what settlement they should end. Let us, in imitation of *him*, *whose children*, if true believers, *we also are* sit loose to every thing in this world, that we may be *ready to leave it* when God shall, by one providence or another, *give the signal* for our remove. If the *next step of duty* lies plain before us, let us *trust our leader* to mark out all that follow, in such an order, and to such an end, as he shall think fit; secure of this, that, while we *follow infinite Wisdom*, we cannot *wander out of the way* to true happiness, and that all the *divine promises* shall certainly be *accomplished*, whatever cross event may seem to interpose and obstruct. Ver. 2—5

When God appointed that *the seed of Abraham* should *sojourn*, and suffer *in a strange land*, the pious *patriarch* acquiesced in it: nor let us be *over anxious* about the difficulties into which *our posterity* may be led. Let us adore the divine goodness, that he has *established his covenant with us*, and *with our seed after us*; and while *we*, in imitation of Abraham, bring *our infant offspring* to receive the solemn *seal of that covenant*, let us remember our engagements to *instruct them*, as they grow up, in the tenor of it, and labour to the utmost to engage *their own personal consent* to it; and then they will be *truly rich* and *free*, though in the penury of *a famished land*, or under the rod of an *Egyptian tyrant*. 6, 7 8 11, 12

The mysterious conduct of *divine Providence* with regard to the pious Joseph, who became *a slave*, that he might be made *a prince*, and who was trained up for the *golden chain* in the discipline of *iron fetters*, may surely be sufficient to teach us to *judge nothing before the time*, and to wait *the end of the Lord*, before we arraign the *seeming severity* of a part of his conduct towards those, whom we might imagine the most proper objects of his regard. And surely it will appear none of the least considerable of *those rewards*, which Providence bestowed on the approved and distinguished *virtue* of Joseph, that he had an opportunity of *nourishing his pious father* in his declining days, of spreading a mild and pleasant ray over the *evening of a life*, which had been so often beclouded with storms, and of sheltering (as it were) under his princely robe, *that hoary head*, which had once been turned into *a fountain of tears* over the *bloody fragments* of the *many coloured coat*. 9, 10 13, 14

SECT.

SECT. XIV.

Stephen proceeds, in his discourse before the Sanhedrim, to enumerate several other facts in the Jewish history, all tending to the purpose of his own vindication, and their conviction. Acts VII. 15—36.

Acts VII. 15.

SECT. XIV.

STEPHEN, while he stood before the council with the radiancy of countenance taken notice of above, proceeded in his discourse, and

Acts VII. 15. said, I have observed to you, brethren, *and* fathers, how *Jacob went down into Egypt; and* you well know, that having been supported about seventeen years by the filial gratitude and tenderness of Joseph, *he died* there; *and our fathers* also, the patriarchs his children, ended

16 their lives in the same country. And yet, by the way, they were solicitous not to be buried there; but as Jacob was immediately brought up, with solemn funeral pomp and procession, to be buried in the cave of Machpelah with Abraham and Isaac, (Gen. xlix. 30,) so the patriarchs also, having been embalmed *and* put into coffins in Egypt, (Gen. l. 26,) *were*, at the return of Israel from thence, *carried over to Sychem, and were laid in the sepulchre which* was made in that field which Jacob bequeathed to Joseph as a peculiar legacy; he having first, as *Abraham* had done in a like case, *purchased* it *for a sum of money*[a], that is, for an hundred pieces

Acts VII. 15.

SO Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he and our fathers.

16 And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the

[a] *Which Abraham purchased,* &c.] It is so evident from Gen. xxxiii. 19. and Josh. xxiv. 32, that the field at Sychem or Shechem, in which the bones of Joseph (and, as it should seem from this passage; and from what is asserted by *Jerom, Epiaph. Paulæ*, those of the *other patriarchs,*) were *buried*, was *purchased*, not by Abraham, but by Jacob, and also that Abraham's *sepulchre* was purchased, not of Emmor, or Hamor, the former proprietor of Jacob's ground, but of *Ephron the Hittite*, (Gen. xxiii. 10, *& seq.*) that it seems demonstrable, that this passage has suffered something by the addition or omission of *transcribers*; for to suppose, that Stephen or Luke designedly used the name of *Abraham* for *Jacob*, is, I think, one of the grossest affronts that can be offered to the character of either. A real *slip of memory* would be a trifle, when compared with such a *designed prevarication*. But, without supposing either, I apprehend with Beza in his admirable note on this text, that Luke probably wrote only *which he* (that is, as the connection fixes it, Jacob) *bought*, &c. which was the exact truth; and some officious *transcriber*, who fancied the *verb* wanted *a nominative case*, and thought he remembered the purchase of Abraham, (which it is plain he did not exactly distinguish,) *put in his name*. This solution, which is advanced by the learned Bochart (*Hierozoic.* Part I. *lib.* ii. *cap.* 43.) Dr. Benson, and others, is so natural, that I will not trouble the reader with the mention of several others, which may be seen in Dr. Whitby, Sir Norton Knatchbull, and Brennius; but shall only observe, that, if *this* be not allowed, (which has indeed *no copy* to support it, the easiest

the sons of Emmor *the father* of Sychem.

pieces of silver, *of the sons of Emmor* [*the father*] *of Sychem*, from whom in particular, the place was named; and the Amorites having afterwards seized it, Jacob had by force recovered it out of their hands. (Compare Josh. xxiv. 32. with Gen. xlviii. 22.) And it was by their own direction the heads of our tribes were kept to be interred here, that they might testify thereby to their posterity, as long as their embalmed bodies continued unburied in Egypt, that they died in the faith of Israel's being led forth from thence and settled in the land of promise, which accordingly happened.

SECT. xiv.

Acts VII. 16.

17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt;

And to make way for the accomplishment of this event, *as the time of the promise drew near, which God had sworn to Abraham*, (Gen. xxii. 16, 17.) *the people* of Israel, though they had such a small beginning, *grew* very numerous, *and multiplied* exceedingly *in Egypt:* And they continued there for many years in very comfortable circumstances, *till another king arose*, of a different race and family from the former, *who knew not Joseph*, and had no regard to his memory. (Exod. i. 8.) *He* therefore used them in a barbarous way, and *forming crafty* and treacherous *designs against our kindred*, lest they in time should grow to be too powerful, *treated our fathers* most *injuriously*, and cruelly contrived to cut them off from being a people, *by causing* all *their* male *infants* in obedience to a most inhuman order that he published, *to be exposed* or cast into the river Nile, *that* in a little time *their race might perish*, and be quite extinct. (Exod. i. 22.)

17

18 Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph:

18

19 The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.

19

20 In which time Moses

Such was the miserable state to which our fathers were reduced, *in which* afflictive persecuting

20

siest sense seems to be that which Mr. L'Enfant has given in his *note*, that *Jacob died, he and our fathers, and they*, [that is, *our fathers*] *were carried over to Sychem, and buried:* he that is, *Jacob*,] *in the sepulchre which Abraham bought for a sum of money*, and *they* [that is, the other patriarchs, *in that* which was bought *of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem.*—That Εμμορ του Συχεμ is very justly rendered *Emmor the father of Sychem*, (as he is declared to be in the *Old Testament*,) though the *relation* be not here expressed in the original, sufficiently appears from other passages, in which not only the relation of *a son*, of which we have frequent instances, but *other relations* too are left to be supplied. So Μαρια Ιακωβου is *Mary the mother of James:* (Luke xxiv. 10. compared with Mark xv. 40.) and Ιουδας Ιακωβου is *Judas the brother of James:* Acts i. 13. compared with Jude, ver. 1. Nor was this only usual with the Jews, but (as Bochart has shewn in the place cited before,) we have many instances of the *like way of speaking* in the most approved Greek writers. See Dr. Whitby's *note* on Luke xxiv. 1.—The other *objections*, which Rabbi Isaac has made against this passage (*Chiss. Emun.* Part II. *cap.* 63.) are so trifling, that I content myself with referring to Mr. Biscoe's full account and learned solution of them, *Boyle's Lect.* chap. xviii. p. 607—609.

b *Exceeding*

SECT. XIV.

Acts VII. 20.

cuting *time* it was, that the celebrated *Moses was born; and* he *was* so *exceeding beautiful* [b], that his parents were struck with a peculiar desire of preserving him; *and* that they might, if possible, secure him from the execution of the barbarous edicts I have just now mentioned, *he was bred up* with all the privacy that could be *for three months in his father's house:* But as they were unable to conceal him any longer, he was committed by them to the care of providence, and having put him in an ark of bulrushes, they laid him in the flags upon the brink of the river Nile. (Exod. ii. 2, 3.) *And being* thus *exposed*, the providence of God so ordered it, that he was found by *the daughter of Pharoah*, who at the sight of him was moved with pity, and *took him up* [c] *and nourished him*, with a purpose of adopting him *for her own son. And Moses* by this means *was educated in all* the whole circle of arts and learning, which came within the system of *the* celebrated *wisdom* and philosophy *of the Egyptians* [d]. *And* such was his

Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:

21 And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter, took him up, and nourished him for her own son.

22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words, and in deeds.

b *Exceeding beautiful.*] This our *translators* render in the margin, *fair to God*, which is the literal sense of the *original*, ασειος τω Θεω. Grotius and others have observed, it is a common *Hebraism*, being no more than an *emphatical expression* to denote his extraordinary beauty which might perhaps be not unfitly rendered *divinely beautiful*, the name of God being often introduced to express such things as were *extraordinary* in their kind. So in the Hebrew, what we translate *great wrestlings*, is *wrestlings of God*; (Gen. xxx. 8.) *goodly cedars* are *cedars of God*; (Psal. lxxx. 10;) *great mountains* are *mountains of God*; (Psal. xxxvi. 6.) and *an exceeding great city* is *a great city of God*; (Jon. iii. 3.) πολις μεγαλη τω Θεω; *Septuag.* And in like manner, in the *New Testament*, (2 Cor. x. 4.) *weapons mighty through God*, οπλα δυνατα τω Θεω, might not improperly be rendered *very strong weapons*. This then agrees with what is said of Moses, (Exod. ii. 2.) that he was *a goodly child*; and, in the account Josephus gives of him, he says, "that, when he was but three years old, his extraordinary beauty was such, that it struck every one that saw him; and, as they carried him about, persons would leave their work to look at him." (*Antiq. lib.* ii. *cap.* 9. [al. 5.] § 6.) The fame of it had also spread among *the Heathen*; for Justin in his History relates from Trogus, (*lib.* xxxvi. *cap.* 2.) that, besides the inheritance of his father's knowledge, whom he takes to have been Joseph, his beautiful appearance greatly recommended him. See *Grotius* and *Whitby in loc.*

c *The daughter of Pharoah took him up.*] All these *extraordinary circumstances* relating to the birth, preservation, education, genius, and character of Moses, serve to aggravate the crime of Israel in *rejecting him*, when he offered himself to them as *a deliverer* under so many advantages, and when *Providence* had so wonderfully interested itself in his favour.

d *Educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.*] Geography, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, natural history, physic, and hieroglyphics, are all mentioned by ancient writers, as branches of Egyptian *literature*. As for *magic* in the bad sense of the word, it is not to be imagined that *so good a man* would have any thing to do with it. Several ancient testimonies to the extraordinary learning of Moses may be seen in the following passages: *Phil. de Vit. Mos.* lib. i. p. 470. *Justin Mart. Quæst. ad Orthod.* xxv. *Orig. contra Cels.* lib. iii. p. 139. *Clem. Alex. Strom.* lib. i. p. 343.——I only add, it must have been *a self-denial*, which none but a lover of learning, and one who has made some progress in it, can understand, for a person of such a genius and education, in the prime of life, to leave the polite *court of Egypt*, and live as *a retired shepherd* in the *Arabian desart*.

e *Mighty*

his remarkable proficiency, that *he was mighty in* the solidity of his *discourses*[e] *and in* the prudence of his *actions*;[f] so that he made a very conspicuous figure, both in the counsels that he gave and the commands he executed, in that polite and justly renowned nation. SECT. XIV. Acts VII. 22.

23 And when he was full forty years old it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

But when he was arrived at the full age of 23 *forty years*, he was conducted into a very different scene of life; for having been instructed in the knowledge of his real descent, and in the principles of the Jewish religion, *it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel*; and his spirit was so impressed with it, that all the pleasure and grandeur at the court of Egypt could not make him easy, without going in person to take a survey of their state. *And* there *beholding one* [*of them*] 24 *injured* by an oppressive Egyptian task-master, who had subdued and got him down, and seemed about to take away his life, his generous spirit was not able to brook it; but *he defended* [*him*] *and smiting the Egyptian* with a mortal wound, *he* at once rescued and *avenged him that was oppressed*. (Exod. ii. 11, 12.) *And* 25 as he did this action by a special impression from God on his mind, intimating the important work for which he was intended, so *he supposed that his brethren*, observing the remarkable circumstances of the fact, by which he substantially declared his readiness to venture, not only his fortune but his life in their service, *would have understood* that the action was expressive of what they might hope to obtain by his means, and intimated *that God would give them salvation* and deliverance *by his hand*[g]: *But they* were

24 And seeing one *of them* suffer wrong, he defended *him*, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:

25 For he supposed his brethren would have understood, how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not.

[e] *Mighty in discourses.*] It may seem difficult to reconcile this with what Moses himself says of his own *want of eloquence*. (Exod. iv. 10.) Some have attempted to do it by explaining this expression, as importing the wisdom of the *laws* he gave as they explain the next clause, *mighty in actions*, of the *miracles* he wrought. But Stephen seems rather to refer to what he was in the *court of Pharaoh*, than to what he *afterwards* proved. I conclude therefore, that it expresses such a *weight* and *solidity* in his *counsels* and *speeches*, as may be very consistent with the *want of a flowing elocution*, and the remarkable *calmness* of his natural temper would render him more entirely *master of himself* on great occasions, rather than others of readier speech with warmer passions.

[f] *And in actions.*] Archbishop Tillotson (in his work, Vol. II. p. 23.) and many others think, that this refers to a story mentioned by Josephus, (*Antiq.* lib. ii. cap. 10. al. 5.) that, when Moses dwelt in Pharaoh's court, the Ethiopians invaded Egypt, and Moses, being made *general* in the war against them, gave them *a total defeat*, and drove back the small remainder of their forces in confusion to their own country.

[g] *He supposed that his brethren would have understood*, &c.] They might have known, that *the time drew near* which God had prefixed in his *promise to Abraham*, in a prediction which might probably be delivered down *by tradition*, and which would be more likely to be remembered *under their oppression*, as the *patriarchs* had

SECT. XIV.

were so exceeding stupid, that they *did not understand* it. *And the next day he shewed himself* again *to* two of *them, as they were quarrelling* together, *and would have* interposed between them, and have *persuaded them to* live in *peace* and friendship, *saying, Men*, my friends, consider *you are brethren*, descended from Jacob our common ancestor, and now too joined in affliction as well as in religion, which ought doubly to cement your affections to each other, *why* then *do ye injure one another? But he that injured his neighbour*, unable to bear with his plain and faithful reproof, insolently *thrust him away*[h], *saying*, What hast thou to do with this controversy? *Who hast made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as* I know *thou didst yesterday slay the Egyptian?* His blood may cost thee dear enough without adding mine to the account. (Exod. ii. 13, 14.) *Then Moses*, as he found the matter was discovered, and was apprehensive that in consequence of it the Egyptian power would be soon armed against him, while the Israelites were not inclined to use any efforts for his protection, nor to put themselves under his guidance, presently *fled* from Egypt *at this saying, and became a sojourner in the land of Midian; where* nevertheless Providence furnished him with a comfortable settlement, though in circumstances of great retirement; for he became the chief shepherd to Jethro, the prince of the country, and marrying Zipporah, his daughter, *he begat two sons* Gershom and Eliezer.

Acts VII. 26.

26 And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?

27 But he that did his neighbour wrong, thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?

28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?

29 Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.

30 *And when forty years* more *were fulfilled*, in which Israel had continued under this bondage, and Moses had been trained up in that humble and retired life for the great work for which God had intended him, *the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in* the midst of *a*

30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai, an angel of

in dependance upon it directed, that *their bones* should continue *unburied* in Egypt: And when they saw *a person* of so much dignity, authority, and influence, whom God had so wonderfully preserved, interposing in this generous and heroic manner, which plainly shewed that he in good earnest intended at all hazards *to do his utmost* for *their deliverance*, it would have been highly reasonable for them to have taken occasion, from this action of his, to enter into *some treaty with him* relating to it.

h *He that injured his neighbour, thrust him away.*] It is plain *the speech* of this *single person* is represented ver. 35. as expressing the sentiments of the *whole body of the people*, as their slowness afterwards to believe the mission of Moses, when attested by *miracle*, Exod. v. 20, 21.) seems evidently to shew that it was.

Loose

of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

a bush, while he was feeding the flock of Jethro his father in law *in the wilderness of mount Sinai*, even of that mount Sinai which (as you know) lay in the confines of the Midianite country, not far from the Red Sea. (Exod. iii. 1, 2.)

sect. xiv.

Acts VII. 30.

31 When Moses saw *it*, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold *it*, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

And Moses, seeing [*it*,] *admired the vision*, for the bush burned with fire, and yet was not consumed; *and as he drew near to behold* and survey [*it*] more particularly, *the voice of the Lord came unto him* out of the bush, 31

32 *Saying*, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.

[*Saying*,] 32 "*I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*, who led them safely through all the difficulties of life, and still manifests a friendship to them; in consequence of which, I am not even now ashamed to own that title." *And Moses* upon this, perceiving that it was God himself who was there present and spake to him, *trembled* at this appearance of his Majesty, *and did not dare to behold* it, as he intended, with a curious regard.

33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet; for the place where thou standest is holy ground.

And the Lord said unto him, 33 "*Loose thy shoes from thy feet*[i]; *for the place in which thou standest is* now *holy ground*, while I thus visibly appear upon it; and it becomes thee (by that usual token of respect before princes) to express thy reverence for my royal presence.

34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them: and now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

I have surely seen the 34 *evil* and oppressive *treatment of my people which are in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning; and* moved with pity and compassion at their sufferings, *I am come down to deliver them* by thine hand: *And now* therefore *come*, and lay aside immediately thy cares of a shepherd for others of much greater importance, and *I will send thee into Egypt*, to demand their dismission from that proud tyrant who so injuriously detains and oppresses them." (Exod. iii. 5—10.)

35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who

And thus you see, what in present circumstances it will be proper for you to reflect upon, that *this Moses, whom they renounced*[k], *saying* with 35

i *Loose thy shoes from thy feet.*] It was formerly in the *eastern nations*, and is now in the *southern*, esteemed *a ceremony of respect*, to *put off the shoes* when approaching a superior, lest any of the *dirt* or *dust* cleaving to *the shoes* should be brought near him, and that the person *approaching barefoot* might tread more cautiously. This, which perhaps was introduced at first in *court apartments* where rich *carpets* might be used, *the King of kings* requires to be done *in a desart*, as a token of the *infinitely greater reverence* due to him. (Compare Josh. v. 15, and Eccles. v. 1.) On the same principle, it seems, *the priests* ministered thus in the *tabernacle* and *temple*, no direction being given for *shoes* or *sandals* as a part of their dress, though all the rest of it was so particularly prescribed.

k *This Moses, whom they renounced.*] As the terms of *high respect*, in which Stephen through

SECT. XIV.

Acts VII. 36.

with disdain, *Who has constituted thee a ruler and a judge?* even *this very person did God, by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush, send* [*to be*] *a ruler and a redeemer.* And though *he* hesitated for a while, he afterwards complied; and at length *led them forth* in triumph, a willing people listed under his banner, *doing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and* afterwards *in the Red Sea*, where Pharaoh and his host were overwhelmed; *and* working many other miracles *in the wilderness for* the space of *forty years*, where indeed they were every day miraculously fed by manna from heaven, and conducted by the pillar of fire and cloud.

Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send *to be* a ruler and a deliverer by the hands of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

36 He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 17 HE is indeed *faithful that hath promised; he remembereth his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded* even *to a thousand generations.* (Psal. cv. 8.) *He multiplied* his people *in Egypt*, that *Canaan* might not want inhabitants, when *the sinners against their own souls* that then held it should be cut off: And when he had determined so to *multiply the holy seed*, vain were all the at-

18, 19 tempts of the ungrateful Egyptians to destroy *the kindred of him* by whom, as they had formerly confessed, *their lives had been saved:* (Gen. xlvii. 25.) Yet was *the rod of the wicked* permitted for a while to *rest upon their back*, that the remembrance of the bondage and the cruelties they had there endured might, throughout all generations, be *a source* of joyful and grateful obedience to that *God* who delivered them *from the land of Egypt, and from the house of bondage*, and an *engagement* to serve him who had so illustriously *triumphed over idolatry*, as it were *in its head-quarters.* The *church* has often had its *winter season*, yet Providence has over-ruled the severity of that, to conduce to the verdure and beauty of its *spring*, and to the fruitfulness of its *summer* and its *autumn.*

20, 21 Moses was *born* in the midst of *this* persecuting *time*, and when *exposed*, was the care of divine Providence; the *compassion* which God put into the heart of this *Egyptian princess*, was to draw after it a train of most important consequences. Moses was fitted for the great part he was to act in the close of life *by very different*

through the whole of this discourse speaks of Moses, tended to shew how improbable it was, that he should have spoken *contemptibly* of him, as the *witnesses pretended;* so this circumstance of the Israelites having *rejected him*, whom *God* had appointed to be *a ruler and redeemer*, intimated how possible it was, that Jesus, whom they had *lately rejected*, might nevertheless be constituted *a Saviour* by the divine determination.

different means; the learning, the magnificence, and politeness of the *court of Egypt* were to do *their part*, that he might be able to appear with honour in that court *as an ambassador*, and to conduct himself with becoming dignity *as a prince;* but they could not *do the whole:* They were to illustrate *his generosity* in seeking, in the midst of such *various pleasures*, and at the expence of such *high prospects* to vindicate *his oppressed brethren*, whose *sorrow* touched his heart, and whose *groans* pierced (if I may so express it) through all the *music* of the *court*, through all the *martial noise* of the *camp*, in which he might sometimes reside and command: Glorious *triumph of faith*, that when he was *come to such full age*, he *refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter*, and *chose rather* to meet with *affliction* in the cause of *Christ, than to enjoy the temporary pleasures of sin!* (Heb. xi. 24, 25.) SECT. XIV. Ver. 22, 23, 24

But *forty years* of retirement *in the desart of Midian*, spent in the meditations and devotions, for which *the life of a shepherd* gave so great advantage, must ripen him *to feed God's people Israel;* while *they*, in the mean time, justly *groaned under* the continuance of *that bondage* from which they were *so backward to accept* of a proffered *deliverer*. 29, 25

At length *light breaks in* upon them in the midst of their darkness: Let us *turn aside and behold* with proper affection *this great sight, the bush burning but not consumed;* and therein *an emblem* of the preservation of *the church*, even amidst the fiercest flames. Let us *hear* with pleasure *that voice* which proclaims to all that hear it, so compassionate and faithful a God, which opens so glorious and lasting a hope; *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* "Thou *art not*, O Lord, *the God of the dead but of the living*, (Mat. xxii. 32.) these pious *patriarchs* therefore *live with thee*, and their *believing seed* shall partake of that life and joy *in the city*, which because *thou hast prepared for them*, thou *art not ashamed to be called their God.*" (Heb. xi. 16.) 30, 31, 32

How does God manifest *the heart of a parent* towards these his oppressed children! *I have seen, I have seen the affliction of Israel:* Thus, O Lord, dost thou *see all our afflictions!* Let *thy church*, and each of *thy people*, trust thee *to come down for their deliverance* in thine own time and way; let us with pleasure behold *this Moses whom they rejected*, and from whom a worthless offender could not bear a reproof, *made a leader and a redeemer:* So is our blessed Jesus, though once rejected and despised, *exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour.* It is not in vain that *we have trusted, it is he that should redeem Israel.* (Luke xxiv. 21.) He has conquered *the tyrant of hell*, he has broken *our chains*, he has brought us forth *into a wilderness*, but *a wilderness* in which God *nourishes* 34, 35, 36

and

SECT. XIV. and *guides* us; and he shall ere long have what Moses had not, the honour and delight of *leading all his people* into *the land of promise*, and dividing to them *a joyful* and *everlasting inheritance* there.

SECT. XV.

Stephen proceeds in his discourse, till his audience are so enraged that they rush upon him and stone him. Acts VII. 37, *to the end.* VIII. 1.

Acts VII. 37.

SECT. XV. STEPHEN went on, in his discourse before the Sanhedrim, to mention several other circumstances concerning Moses, which he judged important to his present purpose; and having taken notice of the commission he received from God to be a ruler and deliverer, and of the wonders that he wrought in Egypt, in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, he added, *This is that Moses who* expressly *said to the children of Israel,* (Deut. xviii. 15.) "*A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you from amongst your brethren like unto me, him shall ye hear*[a]:" Thereby pointing out, that Jesus of Nazareth, who is to be regarded as the great prophet and lawgiver of Israel, by whom God has sent you, as he did by Moses, a new system of precepts, and new ample discoveries of his will.

Acts VII. 37. THIS is that Moses which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me: him shall ye hear.

38 *This* Moses *is he who was* the chief *in the assembly* convened *in the wilderness*[b], who had the honour of conversing *with the angel that spake to him* there *on mount Sinai, and* of transacting all

38 This is he that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai,

[a] *A prophet shall the Lord your God,* &c.] As to the justice with which *this prophecy* is applied to Christ, in its original and *literal sense*, see *Dr. Bullock's Serm.* on Deut. xviii. 18. and *Mr. Jeffery's True Grounds*, p. 128—135. whom I mentioned before in note i on Acts iii. 22, p. 534, to which add *Bishop Sherlock on Prophecy*, p. 187, *&c seq.*

[b] *This is he, who was in the assembly in the wilderness.*] When *this clause* is quoted as it has been by some very great men, to prove that Christ was *the person*, who brought Israel out of Egypt, gave them the *law*, conducted them *through the wilderness*, &c. the argument from thence is certainly *inconclusive*; for οὗτος here evidently answers to οὗτος, ver. 36, and to οὗτος ὁ Μωυσῆς, ver. 37: and the *following clause*, which expresses his being *with the angel*, plainly proves *the angel* to be *a different person*. But I think the doctrine itself, "that Christ was *the God of Israel*, or *the angel* who appeared to Moses," a great and certain truth, capable of being evinced from *many passages* of the *Old* and *New Testament*, and from *this paragraph* in particular, though not from *this clause*; and I hope in due time to shew, that the arguments which Mr. Pierce has urged against it from Heb. xiii. 2. and ii. 2—4, are quite *inconclusive*.——I follow Beza, Heinsius, and the Prussian *translators*, in rendering ἐκκλησία, *assembly*, as our *translators* do, Acts xix. *ult.* because I am persuaded it refers, not in the general to their being incorporated into *one church* in the appropriate sense of that word, but to their being *assembled round the mountain* on the solemn day when the *law* was given, Exod. xix. 17, *&c seq.*

To

Acts VII. 38

Sinai, and *with* our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us,

all things *with our fathers*, whom he then entered into covenant with God: (Exod. xix. 3, 17; xxiv. 7, 8:) And it was he *who received the lively oracles* of God, *to give* them *unto us*, even those oracles of the living Jehovah, which are so full of divine life and energy, which were delivered in so awakening and impressing a manner, and which instruct us in the way to life and happiness. Yet notwithstanding this,

39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,

39 you cannot but remember that this is the illustrious prophet *to whom our fathers*, even after all the proofs of his miraculous power in Egypt and the Red Sea, *would not be obedient*[c]; *but* acted a part yet more stupid and ungrateful than that which I mentioned before, (ver. 27, 35,) when they (as it were) *thrust him from them* a second time, as in contempt of all these wonderful appearances of God by him, *and returned back again to Egypt in their hearts; Saying to*

40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for *as for* this Moses which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

40 *Aaron*, at the very foot of that mountain upon which God had visibly manifested himself to them, while the sound of his voice was (as it were) yet in their ears, and though they but a few days before had seen their great leader ascending up to him by an intimacy of approach allowed to no other mortal, "*Make us Gods, who may march before us*, and conduct us in the way; *for* [*as for*] *this Moses, who* indeed *brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him*, and cannot have patience to wait for him any longer. *And they*

41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

41 stupidly *made a calf*, in imitation of the Egyptian Apis, *in those* very *days* while they continued encamped in that remarkable situation, *and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands*, as if, instead of a reproach and abomination, it had been an ornament and defence to them. (Exod. xxxii. 1, 6.) *But* upon this *God* was most righteously provoked, so that he *turned*, as it were, away from them, *and*, as in many other instances, punished one sin by letting them fall into another; yea, at length he *gave them up* in succeeding ages to the most abandoned, public, and general idolatry, even *to worship* all *the host of*

42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of

42

c *To whom our fathers would not be obedient.*] This is observed by Stephen once and again, and he insists upon it largely, that they might see it was *no new thing*, for Israel to rebel against God by *rejecting deliverers* sent from him.

SECT. XV.

Acts VII. 42.

of heaven with as little reserve, and as little shame, as the most stupid of the heathen nations; *as it is written in the book of the prophets*, and particularly in that part of the volume of which Amos was the penman, (Amos v. 25—27.) "*O ye house of Israel, did ye offer victims and sacrifices to me* alone, even *for forty years in the wilderness?* You know, that even then you began to revolt and provoke me to jealou-

of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices, by the space of forty years in the wilderness?

43 sy with your abominations. *And* you have ever since been renewing and aggravating your rebellions and treasons against me; for *you have* openly *taken up the tabernacle of Moloch*[d], instead of confining yourselves to mine, *and* have carried in public procession *the star of your god* Chiun or *Remphan*[e], paying a religious veneration to *the* emblematical *figures* and representations *which you have made* whereby *to worship them; and* therefore *I will* pour out, on this generation, the wrath that you and your fathers have been so long treasuring up, and will *carry you away* into captivity *beyond Babylon*, into countries more distant than those inhabited

43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your God Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

[d] *You have* openly *taken up*, &c.] The learned De Dieu has a most curious and amusing, but to me very unsatisfactory *note*, on this verse. He saw, and I wonder so many great *commentators* should not have seen, the *absurdity* of imagining, that Moses would have suffered idolatrous processions in the wilderness. Therefore he maintains, that Amos here refers to *a mental idolatry*, by which, considering *the tabernacle* as a model of the visible heavens, (a fancy to be sure as old as Philo and Josephus,) they referred it, and the worship there paid, to Moloch, so as to make it in their hearts, in effect, *his shrine*, and there also to pay homage to Saturn, whom he would prove to be the same with Chiun or Remphan, who (as this critic thinks,) might be called *their star*, because some later *rabbies*, out of their great regard to *the Sabbath*, which was among the Heathen *Saturn's day*, have said many extravagant and ridiculous things in honour of that planet. *Lud. Capellus* hints at this interpretation too. But the words of *the prophet*, and of Stephen, so plainly express *the making of images*, and the pomp of their superstitious *processions*, (see *Young on Idolatry*, Vol. I. p. 128—131,) that I think, if *external idolatry* is not referred to here, it will be difficult to prove it was *ever practised*. I conclude therefore, considering what was urged in the beginning of *this note*, that God here refers to *the idolatries*, to which *in succeeding ages* they were gradually given up, (after having begun to revolt in the wilderness by the sin of the *golden calf*;) which certainly appears (as Grotius has justly observed,) from its being assigned as *the cause of their captivity*; which it can hardly be conceived, *the sin of their fathers in the wilderness*, almost *seven* or *eight hundred* years before, could possibly be, though in conjunction with *their own wickedness in following ages* God might (as he threatened, Exod. xxxii. 34) remember that. Compare 2 Kings xvii. 16; xxi. 3; xxiii. 5.

[e] *Moloch, and——Remphan.*] Probably *the sun* was represented by Moloch, and some *star* (whether *Saturn*, *Venus*, or *the Moon*, I cannot determine,) by Remphan which plainly is intended to answer to *Chiun* (if that were the original reading) in the *Old Testament*; but neither *the etymology* of the name, nor the *particular planet* to which it referred, seems to me sufficiently evident. The learned reader will find a curious *dissertation* on this subject in *Vitringa*, *Observ. Sacr.* Vol. I. *lib* ii. *cap.* 1, with which he may compare *Wits. Miscell. lib.* ii. *diss.* v. § 2—17. Beza reads *Rephan* for *Remphan*, and interprets it of some gigantic statue of Hercules, called *Chiun* from its strength; and Lud. Capellus and Dr. Hammond interpret it of *an Egyptian king* called *Remphis*: But I can pronounce nothing certain concerning so obscure a point.

[f] *Beyond*

habited by the captives who were carried from Damascus [f]." SECT. XV.

44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen:

Nor can you be insensible, that their crime was far more aggravated, than the idolatry of the Heathen whom they imitated, considering the exact model of religious and divine worship which God had given them: for *the tabernacle of witness* [g], in which the tables of testimony were lodged, as a constant witness of the relation between God and Israel, *was with our fathers in the wilderness;* a tabernacle which was made in all respects *as he had appointed, who spake unto Moses*, commanding him *to make it* exactly *according to the model which he had seen* in the mount. (Exod. xxv. 40.) Acts VII. 44.

45 Which also our fathers that came after, brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David:

Which also our fathers, who succeeded them in the next generation, *receiving* from their hands, *brought in with Joshua*, when he led them over Jordan *into the* land which had been formerly in *possession of the heathen, whom God drove out from before the face of our fathers*, and divided the land for an inheritance to them. 45

46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

And this tabernacle continued to be the resort of the pious worshippers of Israel, *until the days of David; Who found favour before God, and* was made remarkably successful in the wars he undertook in defence of that kingdom over which God had placed him, upon which he *made it his petition* [h], that he might have the honour *to find a* more stable and splendid *dwelling for the God of Jacob*, and with this view he consecrated a considerable part of the spoils which he had taken from the enemy towards erecting it. 46

47 But Solomon built him an house.

But as he was a man of war, and had shed blood, the offer that he made was not accepted, (1 Chron. xxviii. 3,) nor was there any temple for the worship of God, for many years after the settlement of our fathers in Canaan, till *Solomon* at length, by express 47

[f] *Beyond Babylon*, into countries more distant, &c.] Thus Dr. Prideux (*Connect.* Vol. I. p. 13) reconciles Stephen's quotation with the original in Amos, where it is said, *beyond Damascus*; and I find no solution more natural. But Beza, observing these words to be quoted in Justin Martyr, according to the Hebrew, thinks the original reading here accidentally changed.

[g] *The tabernacle of witness.*] As Stephen had been accused of *blaspheming the temple*, he with great propriety takes occasion to speak of *their sacred places* with due reverence, as raised by special direction from God, and yet corrects that extravagant regard for them, and confidence in them, which the Jews were ready to entertain.

[h] *Made it his petition.*] So ותמצא signifies; and, from the account the scripture gives of David, it appears how much it *lay upon his heart*, and how greatly he longed *to find out a place for the Lord*: (Compare 2 Sam. vii. 2 *& seq.* and Psal. cxxxii. 1—5.) The *gold* and *silver*, and other costly materials he had prepared for it, amount to *so vast a sum*, that it is not easy to give an account of it: See 1 Chron. xxii. 14; and xxix. 2—5.

SECT. XV.

express divine appointment, *built him an house*, which till the reign of that prince he never had commanded or permitted to be done.

Acts VII. 48. *Yet*, after all, we are not to imagine that he permitted it even then for his own sake; for as it was acknowledged at the same time by Solomon himself, (2 Chron. vi. 18,) *the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands*, be they ever so rich, splendid, or majestic; *as the prophet* Isaiah also *says*, (Isa. lxvi. 1,) where he is

49 speaking in the name of God, "*Heaven is my* royal *throne*, *and the* whole *earth is* no more than *my footstool*, and how then shall my presence be confined to any particular place? *What* suitable *house will you build for me, saith the Lord; or, what is the place of my* stated

50 *rest? Hath not my hand made all these things*, and whatever splendor they have, did I not form the materials, and endow the workmen that have fashioned them with all their art and genius? Do not imagine then that you can confer any obligation upon me by such structures as these, or by any act of homage which you can render in them; nor think that you can charm me to continue my abode there, or to be a constant guard to you, merely because you have such edifices amongst you."

51 And Stephen finding, by a confused murmur in the place, that they understood whither his discourse was leading them, and perceiving by the eagerness of their countenance that they would be like soon to interrupt him, applied himself more closely to his persecutors in these remarkable words, which he boldly addressed to them under the influence of the Holy Spirit, by whose immediate direction he spoke: *Oh ye stiff-necked*, inflexible, and obstinate sinners, who though ye have received the sign of circumcision, and boast that you belong to God as his peculiar people, yet in reality are alienated from him, *and uncircumcised in heart and ears*, so that you will not hearken to instruction, or be tenderly and seriously affected with it, nothing can be more plain than that *ye always do resist the Holy Spirit*, and set yourselves in opposition to all his gracious efforts for your recovery and salvation; even *as your fathers* [*did*] in former

52 ages, *so do ye* now. *Which of the prophets*, who were actuated by that Spirit, *did not your fathers*

48 Howbeit, the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,

49 Heaven *is* my throne, and earth *is* my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what *is* the place of my rest?

50 Hath not my hand made all these things?

51 Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye.

52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers

fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

fathers persecute[i]*? yea, they slew those who spake before*, and published the glad tidings *of the coming of that Righteous One*[k]*, of whom you* should have heard with delight, and whom you ought to have received with the most humble reverence and joyful consent; but of whom, instead of protecting and honouring him, you *have now become the* prefidious *betrayers, and* the cruel *murderers*[l]*:* For by you his death was contrived, by you he was condemned, by you the sentence was extorted against him, and execution urged and obtained. Which is the less to be wondered at, as you have already despised so many advantages, and given such amazing proofs of the obstinacy and hardness of your hearts, *who have received the law*, which was delivered from mount Sinai with such awful pomp, *through ranks of angels*[m], that were marshalled in solemn array on that grand occasion, (Compare Deut. xxxiii. 2,) *and* yet have been so hardened that you *have not kept it:* and now you go on to add sin to sin, in rejecting the milder and more gracious dispensation of the gospel.

SECT. XV.

Acts VII. 51

53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*. 53

54 When they heard these things, they were cut *And hearing these things, their hearts were,* as it were, *sawn asunder; and* not permitting him 54

[i] *Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute?*] I see no reason to conclude from hence, that *many Scriptures* containing the history of these persecutions *are destroyed* by the Jews, as Mr. Whiston maintains: (*Essay for restoring*, &c. p. 138.) It is natural to understand this *in a limited sense*, only as intimating, that *most of them* suffered such unworthy usage; and we know that attempts were sometimes made to cut off *all the prophets of Jehovah* at once. 1 Kings xix. 10, 14. Compare 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.

[k] *That righteous One.*] Christ was by way of eminence called so, as being *alone perfectly righteous*. Compare Isa. liii. 11. Zech. ix. 9. Acts iii. 14.

[l] *The betrayers and murderers.*] It is a fine remark of Grotius, that the *Sanhedrim* was obliged, by virtue of its very constitution, to *guard* and *defend* the lives of *the prophets* with peculiar care, how much more to *protect* such a divine messenger as Christ was from any injurious assault? instead of which, they had not only basely *deserted him*, but had themselves become *principals in his murder*.

[m] *Through ranks of angels.*] It seems evident from Heb. ii. 2, and Gal. iii. 19, that God made use of *angels*, as the instruments of *forming the voice* heard from *mount Sinai*. And, so far as I can judge of the learned Elsner's arguments, in his *dissertation* against Cocceius on this head, from Wolfius' abstract of them, he seems to have the advantage; but *this text* is so properly rendered, *through ranks of angels*, (εις διαταγας αγγελων,) that I apprehend nothing can be argued from hence, but that they *graced the solemnity* with their presence. Grotius explains it thus, justly observing, that it is a *military word*. Heinsius has taken great pains to prove what Vatablus hints, that the word αγγελων here, as well as in the places quoted above, signifies *messengers*, that is, *prophets*, and that διαταγας is to be traced to a *Chaldee etymology* from מגלה, *a copy or explication*, as if it had been said, "The law has been *copied out*, and expounded to you, by a series of *prophets*." But had this learned *critic* seen, how easily *these expressions*, as here translated, may be *reconciled* with the supposition, that Christ, as the great *angel of God's presence*, presided, while *troops of angels* assisted, (as independent on these texts in the *New Testament*, it is certain they did, see Psalm lxviii. 17, he would not have had recourse to so forced an interpretation.

SECT. XV.

him to proceed any farther, in a transport of rage *they gnashed their teeth upon him*, as if they would have devoured him alive.

cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth.

Acts VII. 55. *But he, being full of the Holy Spirit*, was by no means terrified with the evil which seemed to be determined against him, but *looking up stedfastly towards heaven*, he *saw*, in a most delightful visionary representation, even while he stood in their court, a bright symbol of *the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand*

55 But he being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

56 *of God. And* being unable to contain his joy, *he* cried out in a sacred transport, and *said, Behold*, even now *I see the heavens opened* [n], *and the Son of Man* that glorious sovereign whom you condemned and murdered, *standing at the right hand of God* [o], where he shall ever reign, to save his people, and at length to execute full vengeance upon his enemies; as he himself solemnly warned you, when like me he was your prisoner. (Mat. xxvi. 64.)

56 And said, Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.

57 *And* this declaration and reference provoked them to such a degree, that *crying out with a loud voice*, that they might drown that of Stephen, *they stopped their* own *ears*, as if they could not bear to hear such blasphemy, as they conceived he had spoken, *and* furiously *rushed upon*

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord.

58 *him with one accord. And casting him out of the city*, by a gate which was near the place where the Sanhedrim sat, as soon as they had got without the boundaries of that sacred place, which they judged it a profanation to stain with human blood, *they stoned him* [p]; *and the* two

58 And cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him*: and the witnesses laid

n *I see the heavens opened.*] Witsius declares it as his opinion, (*Miscell. lib.* i. *cap.* xxi. § 6,) that *the heavens* were really *divided*, or rendered transparent, so that *the throne of Christ's glory there* became visible. But, not to insist on many other *improbable circumstances* attending this hypothesis, it would then have been *a miracle*, if all that were present had not seen it; for on such a declaration they would naturally *look up*. It is much more reasonable to suppose, he *saw a visionary representation*. God *miraculously operating* on his imagination, as on Ezekiel's, when he *sat in his house* at Babylon among the *elders of Judah*, and saw *Jerusalem*, and seemed to himself *transported thither*; (Ezek viii. 1—4.) I say, *miraculously operating*; for the *imagination* is not itself capable of performing any such wonders, whatever some, very ignorant of *human nature*, or disingenuous enough knowingly to misrepresent it, may fancy.—I am very ready to conclude with Mr. Addison, that *other martyrs*, when called to suffer the last extremities, had *extraordinary assistances* of some similar kind, or frail mortality could not surely have endured *the torments* under which they *rejoiced*, and sometimes *preached Christ* to the conversion of spectators, and in some instances of their guards and tormentors too. See *Addison of Christianity*, chap. vii. § 5.

o *Standing at the right hand of God.*] Mr. N. Taylor, (in his excellent *Discourse of Deism*, p. 69) observes, that Christ is generally represented *sitting*, but now as *standing at God's right hand*; that is, as risen up from the throne of his glory, to afford help to his distressed servant, and ready to receive him.

p *They stoned him.*] This seems (like the

laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

two *witnesses*, whose hands were first upon him to put him to death, (Deut. xvii. 7,) *laid down their* upper *garments at the feet of a young man, whose name was Saul*, who willingly took the charge of them, to shew how heartily he concurred with them in the execution.

SECT. XV.

Acts VII. 58

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.

And thus *they stoned Stephen*, who during this furious assault continued with his eyes fixed on that glorious vision, *invoking* his great Lord, *and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit*[q]; for important as the trust is, I joyfully commit it to thy powerful and faithful hand. And having nothing further relating to himself which could give him any solicitude, all his remaining thoughts were taken up in compassion to these inhuman wretches who were arming themselves for his destruction; so that, after having received many violent blows rising as well as he could into a praying posture, *and bending his knees, he cried out with a loud* though expiring *voice, O Lord, charge not this sin to their account* with strict severity, proportionable to the weight of the offence[r]; but graciously forgive them, as

59 60

the stoning Paul at Lystra, chap. xiv. 19) to have been *an act of popular fury*, and exceeding the power which the Jews regularly had; which, though it might have extended to *passing a capital sentence*, (which yet we read nothing of here,) was not sufficient (so far as I can find on the most careful renewed examination of all Mr. Biscoe has urged) for carrying it into *execution* without the *consent of the Romans*. The Jews were more than once ready to *stone Christ*, not only when by their own *confession they had not power to put any one to death*, (John xviii. 31,) but when nothing had passed which had the shadow of a legal trial. (Compare John viii. 59; x. 31; *& seq.*) How far they now might have formed those express notions of what the *rabbies* ca'l *the judgment of zeal*, I know not; but it is certain they acted *on that principle*, and as if they had thought, every private Israelite had, like Phinehas, who is pleaded as an example of it, *a right* to put another to death *on the spot*, if he found him in a capital breach of the divine law; a notion by the way, directly contrary to Deut. xvii. 6, which requires at least *two witnesses* in capital cases, where there is a legal process. See Mr. *Lardner's Credib.* Part I. Book I. chap. 2, Vol. I. edit. 3, p. 112—120. Dr. Benson suggests some probable reasons, which might induce Pilate (who probably still continued *procurator of Judea,)* to connive at this great irregularity and outrage. *Hist. of Christianity*, p. 137.

q *Invoking and saying*, &c.] This is the *literal version* of the words, επικαλουμενον και λεγοντα, the name of *God* not being in the *original*. Nevertheless such a solemn *prayer to Christ*, in which *a departing soul* is thus solemnly *committed into his hands*, is such an *act of worship*, as we cannot believe any good man would have paid to *a mere creature*.——Bp. Burnet (on the *Articles*, p. 48) justly observes, that Stephen here *worships Christ* in the very same manner, in which Christ had but a little while before *worshipped the Father* on the cross.

r *Charge not this sin to their account.*] The words in the *original*, μη στησης αυτοις την αμαρτιαν ταυτην, seem to have *an emphasis*, which, though I have hinted in the *paraphrase*, (as well as I could without multiplying words, to a degree that in this circumstance would have been very improper,) I could not exactly and naturally express in the *version*. It is literally, *Weigh not out to them this sin*, that is, a punishment proportionable to it; alluding (as Elsner well observes) to passages of *Scripture*, where God is represented as *weighing men's characters* and *actions* in the dispensations of his justice and providence. Compare 1 Sam. ii. 3. Job xxxi. 6. Prov. xvi. 2. Isai. xxvi. 7. Dan. v. 27.——See *Elsner. Observ.* Vol. I. p. 395, 396.

SECT. XV.

as I do from my very heart. *And when he had said this*, he calmly resigned his soul into his Saviour's hand, and with a sacred serenity in the midst of this furious assault *he* sweetly *fell asleep*, and left the traces of gentle composure, rather than of horror, upon his breathless corpse.

Acts VII. 60

charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

And Saul, the young man mentioned above, at whose feet the witnesses laid down their clothes, was so far from being shocked at this cruel scene, that, on the contrary, he *was well pleased with his slaughter*; being so full of rage and malice against the Christian name, that he thought no severities could be too great for those who thus zealously endeavoured to propagate it.

Acts VIII. 1

Acts VIII. 1.—And Saul was consenting unto his death.—

IMPROVEMENT.

Ver. 37 THANKFULLY must we own the divine goodness in having *fulfilled* this important promise, of *raising up a prophet like Moses*, a prophet indeed *far superior* to him *whom God's Israel* is on the highest penalties *required to hear*. May we be all *taught by him*, and ever own *that divine authority* which attends all his doctrines 38 and all his commands! By him God has given us *lively oracles* indeed, that may well penetrate deep into our souls, as being well contrived to animate them, and to secure their eternal life.

But O, how many of those who have *heard of him*, and been *baptized into his name*, in a more express manner than *Israel* was *baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea*, (1 Cor. x. 2) re- 39 fuse to hearken to him, and *in their hearts turn back into Egypt*; being guilty of practices as notoriously opposite to his precepts, 40, 41 as the idolatry of *the golden calf* to those of *Moses*: Long did the patience of God *bear with Israel* in succeeding ages, while 42, 43 *the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of Remphan* diverted their regards from the worship of their *living Jehovah*; but at length he *gave them up to captivity*. Well have we deserved, by *our apostacy from God*, to be made proportionable *monuments of his wrath*; yet still he continues graciously to *dwell among us*; and 44 while *the Jewish tabernacle*, formed so exactly *after the divine* 47 *model* in the mount *is no more*, and while the more splendid *temple* which Solomon raised is long since *laid in desolation*, the most 78, 49 high God, superior to all *temples made with hands*, infinitely superior even to *heaven itself*, continues still to favour us with *his presence*, and condescends to *own us for his people*, and to *call himself our God* Let us take the most diligent heed that we be 52 not *uncircumcised in heart and in ears*, and that we do not, after so fatal an example, *resist the Holy Spirit*, and by *rejecting Christ*, incur

incur *a guilt* greater than that of the Jews, who *violated the law* SECT
received through ranks of attendant *angels;* for that milder and XV.
gentler form, in which *this divine lawgiver* has appeared to us, Ver
will render the ingratitude and guilt of *our rebellion* far more 53
aggravated than theirs.

The *reproofs* of the holy martyr Stephen were indeed *plain* and *faithful,* and therefore they were so much the more *kind;* but instead of *attending* to so just and so wise a remonstrance, those *sinners against their own souls stopped their ears,* lift up *an outrage-* 57
ous cry, and like so many savage beasts *rush upon him* to destroy him; overwhelming *that head* with stones which *shone like an angel of God:* Fatal instance of *prejudice* and of *rage!* But how 56
were all the terrors of *this murderous crew,* when armed with the instruments of *immediate death,* dispelled by the glorious vision of *Christ at the right hand of God!* Well might he then *remain in-* 59
trepid, well might he *commend his departing spirit* into the hands of *his divine Saviour,* as *able to keep what he committed to him until that day.* 2 Tim. i. 12.

Let us with holy pleasure behold *this bright image of our Redeemer,* this *first martyr,* who following so closely *his recent steps,* (as he suffered so near the place that had been the scene of his agonies,) appears to have imbibed so much of *the same Spirit:* Having thus solemnly *consigned his soul to Christ,* all that remained was, *like Christ,* to *pray for his murderers;* full of compassion for their souls, while dying by their hands, he only said, *Lord,* 60
lay not this sin to their charge, and then gently *fell asleep;* expired in holy composure and serenity of soul, and *slept sweetly* in the soft bosom of his Saviour.

O *Saul,* couldst thou have believed, if one had told thee, while 58
thou wast *urging on* the cruel multitude, while thou wast *glorying over* his venerable corpse, that the time should come when *thou thyself* shouldst be *twice stoned* in the cause in which he died, and triumph in having *committed thy soul* likewise *to that Jesus* whom thou wast *now blaspheming!* In this instance *his dying prayer* was illustriously *answered:* In this instance *the lion lies down with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid,* (Isa. xi. 6.) and it is most delightful to think, that *the martyr Stephen,* and *Saul that barbarous persecutor,* (afterwards *his brother* both *in faith* and *in martyrdom,* are now *joined in bonds* of everlasting *friendship,* and *dwell together* in the happy company of *those who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb:* (Rev. vii. 14.) May *we* at length *be joined with them,* and in the mean time let us *glorify God in both!*

END OF THE SEVENTH VOLUME.

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